LATIN GLOSSING, MEDIEVAL LITERARY THEORY, AND THE CROSS-CHANNEL READERS OF CHAUCER

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by

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Abstract

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Current scholarship conceives of medieval society as remote, existing in the chronological and intellectual space of the pre-modern and thus, categorically other. In the study of literature, this enforced alterity takes form as an assertion of conceptual difference in the ontological status of literature. Medieval literary criticism, as current scholarship holds, had no concept of ‘literature’ as we understand it; rather, literary works were considered to pertain to the study of ethics. Under this hermeneutic rubric, medieval readers would seek moral instruction in their poetry; fictional narrative and literary style were integumenta concealing an ethical truth which was to be identified and clearly explicated.

This dissertation addresses marginalia that suggest another set of reading practices entirely. Latin marginalia in the manuscripts of Chaucer’s poetry reveal an affinity not for delineating orthodox interpretation, but rather for creating—and reveling in—intertextual hermeneutic ambiguity that diverges more from ethical reading practices than current scholarship has allowed. Yet the glosses have never
been properly understood or integrated into the study of the poet’s works, despite the fact that the scholars who have most closely studied these manuscripts believe the glosses to be the work of Chaucer himself. This dissertation begins from a consideration of the authorial glosses in *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The Canterbury Tales* which engage readers at multiple levels of literacy, enabling, for certain tiers of readers, the proliferation of multiple competing interpretations of the text. I trace the glosses’ evolution through their adaptation by readers the 15th century. Before turning to a case study of a series of readers’ glosses to *Troilus and Criseyde*, which highlight a new emphasis affective methods of reading—typically only addressed in devotional literature—in which readers engage in emotional identification with, and absorption into, their texts.

It concludes by addressing potential analogues—both in England and on the continent—arguing that these manuscripts further affirm the hermeneutic of the Chaucer glosses. Reading Chaucer’s poetry as it was circulated in medieval England, accompanied by its marginal apparatus, significantly reshapes modern critical approaches to Chaucer’s poetry in particular and to medieval critical practices in general.
For my parents, Tom and Jane, and Miriam, my sister
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CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This dissertation seeks to complement the existing scholarly picture of medieval literary criticism by exploring the modes of reader interaction that stand apart, in some way, from the current scholastically-determined picture, whether by engaging the concepts of criticism set forth in the *accessus* or constituting the ‘ethical mode’ in ways so deeply transformative as to almost rupture, or by working fully apart from them. It comprises, in particular, a study of the Latin glosses and readers’ annotations in manuscripts of Chaucer’s poetry. These glosses consist primarily of quotations from his Latin source material, set without citation against moments of the poet’s close reliance on his Latin sources. In Cambridge University Library Gg.4.27 and Cambridge St. John’s College Li, two copies of *Troilus and Criseyde*, they take the form of a series of five quotations from Joseph of Exeter’s *Iliad*, a lengthy poem recounting the narrative of the Trojan War as an allegorical condemnation of the then Archbishop of Canterbury. To the medieval reader who was familiar with the Latin poem, this contextualization locates Chaucer’s Trojan romance within the larger tradition of Joseph’s condemnation of cupidity and avarice, offering a moral interpretation of the poem that departs radically from the level of signification suggested by the text itself.
The glosses in The Canterbury Tales represent a significantly more elaborate apparatus of Latin quotations, drawn from Scripture and from patristic exegetical works like Jerome’s Against Jovinian, from Innocent III’s De contemptu mundi and from the Communiloquium of John of Wales, and from astronomical texts and from the poetry of Petrarch, all of which grace the margins of the Tales at passages where the text is deeply indebted to its sources. These often-abbreviated quotations from the Latin sources frequently gloss passages where the English text dramatically reinterprets the spirit of Chaucer’s sources: the “Wife of Bath’s Prologue,” for example, re-imagines Against Jovinian's polemical exegesis of Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians in the form of the Wife’s spirited defense of her multiple successive remarriages, a practice to which her auctoritas in Jerome was vehemently opposed.  

In the “Prologue”‘s margins, readers discover quotations from Jerome’s interpretations of the Pauline epistle, providing access to a doubled contextualization of the poem in which they may enjoy the humor of the literal level of the Wife’s argument, may consider her argument in light of the explicit disavowal of serial remarriage in the very source she quotes, or may read a level deeper, and reinterpret not only her Prologue, but also the Hieronymic text in the more lenient context of their Pauline mutual source.

These glosses are made all the more intriguing by two significant aspects of their composition: they are increasingly commonly attributed to Chaucer himself, suggesting that our current understanding of the English poet’s use of his sources is vastly more complicated than current scholarship allows. They are, moreover, hermeneutically dissimilar from the marginalia that accompany the poetry of
Chaucer’s English contemporaries. The *Confessio Amantis* of John Gower, a contemporary and friend of Chaucer’s, incorporates a complex Latin apparatus that works in a way congruent with current theories of medieval literary criticism, to guide the reader to a clearly-stated, orthodox interpretation of the poem, a practice that differs tremendously from Chaucer’s.\(^1\) Marginalia in the manuscripts of William Langland’s *Piers Plowman*, on the other hand, are not thought to be the work of the poet himself, and display very little of the cohesiveness that attends the body of Chaucer glosses that travels with multiple manuscripts of his poems.

This dissertation seeks to discern the manner in which these marginalia direct readers to interact with the texts they gloss. I explore the extent to which the reading practices these commentaries demonstrate align themselves with scholastic models that emphasize the text’s philosophical utility, and where they bespeak other reading practices. These alternate approaches to reading follow two main tracks: the first, a hermeneutic of ambiguity, eschews directing readers to a particular interpretation, instead offering them multiple possible ways to read a text. This is the hermeneutic enabled by glosses like those in the “Wife of Bath’s Prologue.” The multi-dimensional intertextuality evinced in the relationships between Chaucerian text and Latin marginalia witness a series of readerly priorities that appears to differ significantly from those literary theories demonstrated in the prologues and *accessus* to medieval copies of classical poetry, and codified as medieval literary criticism, authorship theories, and *ars grammatica*.

\(^1\) For more detail, see the Conclusion to this dissertation, pages 250-54.
The second track follows the affective literacy set forth in some later medieval religious texts, in which the reader's emotional identification with and subsumption into the text acts as the catalyst to intense prayer and devotional contemplation. These deeply personal reader-text interactions are espoused in a number of devotional treatises, vernacular and Latin, which flourished in the fourteenth century and date back to early Christian authors who stressed the importance of meditative reading practices. This affective literacy is, however, rarely associated with the consumption of non-devotional literature: the great exception, Dante’s Paolo and Francesca, who are inspired to consummated their love for one another through a passionate identification with a romance of Lancelot and Guinevere which they are reading together, epitomize bad readers, incorrect interpreters of the text. Nevertheless, certain readers of Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde* suggest the possibility of similarly emotional identification with the poem, and my dissertation addresses the ways in which these glosses manifest varying connections between the text and its readers.

This focus on the nexus of reader-text interaction is of particular import. It must be noted, though, that in speaking of the interactions of the texts and potential readers in this dissertation, that these reading practices should best be understood as being directed at particular tiers of readers: there are likely to be plenty of people who read—or heard—Chaucer’s poetry and did not attend to its glosses. Some may not have had access to glossed copies of the poems—or even gotten to read the verse for themselves. Some may have had glossed manuscripts, but not been able to read the Latin; some may have been Latin literate, but not recognized the sources of
the quotations. The hermeneutics of the manuscripts in this dissertation, then, are not equally accessible to all of Chaucer’s readers. This does not, however, negate the significance of the potential depth that they offer; rather, they are written for a tiered readership, only some of whom were able to—and wished to—read the full intertextual renegotiation of the poem embedded in its glosses.²

1.2 The Shape of Medieval Literary Criticism

In 1982, Judson Boyce Allen published The Ethical Poetic of the Later Middle Ages: A Decorum on Convenient Distinction. Allen argued persuasively in favor of abandoning modern ontological categorizations of literary value; they are, he claimed, foreign to medieval readers, who rather read, interpreted, understood, engaged with texts in what he calls the “ethical mode.” Allen first became a medievalist, he tells us, when confronted in the Bodleian library with a series of texts which did not match his own New Critical (by self-admission) expectations:

In the largest sense, I expected three things, which, of course, seem to me so obviously intrinsic to any discussion of poetry that one might claim to find no poetic for which they were not discussed. I expected first to find a category for poetry—that is, an entity corresponding to what we call literature or belles-lettres, in which we could securely find such texts as the Divina commedia and The Canterbury Tales, and in which we could confidently fail to find any Summa theologica or treatise de regimine principum, or merely mnemonic verse, or any other such ‘non-literary’ text. In the second place, I expected to find a sense of literary form which was intra-textual. I expected medieval critics to see that any given poetic text has its own integrity, and that is form and coherence should be generated

and defined by constraints, intentions, and forces internal to the text. Third, I expected the discourse of poetry, in so far as it was rhetorical, to achieve or enact with audience an instance of contact with an Other.³

In this, he was frustrated. But, as Allen narrates, he found instead far more capacious categories of thinking about medieval text, ones which elided the kinds of textual distinctions he expected, and drew upon the vast body of commentaries produced by medieval exegetes in order to valorize a contemporaneous theory of literary criticism which asked scholars to think not about their own perceptions of what was and was not literary, and focus instead on the structures of interpretation which undergirded the ways that medieval readers talked about texts. For Allen, the “ethical mode” is concerned broadly with human behavior, involving an act of interpretation and assimilation in which readers’ thought follows the particulars of *exempla*, stories, grouped into “normative arrays”—logically organized and proceeding collections which define “some important ethical truth”, and which the reader then approximates themselves, drawing the ethical truth into an act of self-comprehension.⁴ For Allen, *assimilatio* is a complex concept, most closely aligned, conceptually, with the concept of ‘mimesis’, encompassing problems of representation and interpretation, and a dual negotiation between the real world and the world of the poem. *Assimilatio*, here, concerns figuration and metaphoric language, and semiotic negotiation. It takes three forms: general comparison, the


⁴ Allen, *The Ethical Poetic*, 104.
relationship between a description of something and that thing itself, and finally the evocation of or relation to a universal, demonstrating a truth about the world, rather than arbitrary poetic self-indulgence. It is a theory of interpretation that, even as it leaves space to consider formal and stylistic choices, nonetheless remains distinct from any concern with the privileged status given to ‘literature’ over other texts in contemporary thought.\(^5\) This process, part of the inherent structuring of poetry, is not limited to the world of the text, however: as language relates to things, so do texts’ audiences relate texts to the real world. The potential, then, is for assimilation to reach an apogee in which readers relate a text to themselves, their world, their thoughts and assimilate the ideas of the text back into this real world, so that “the true poem fully exists as its textuality is supplemented by audience and commentary.”\(^6\)

My aim here is not to paint \textit{The Ethical Poetic} as a watershed text, sprung \textit{ex nihilo},\(^7\) and from which New Criticism never again was able to recover, but offers a particularly compelling instance of a sea-change in one scholar’s thinking about medieval literary criticism, and thus forms a significant point of departure. It was followed, two years later, by Alastair Minnis’ \textit{Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages}, which tracks the twin concepts

\(^5\) Allen, \textit{The Ethical Poetic}, 181-82.

\(^6\) Allen, \textit{The Ethical Poetic}, 289.

\(^7\) Indeed, D.W. Robertson, had already challenged the application of New Criticism ideas to medieval literature, arguing that medieval scriptural exegesis offered a sounder foundation from which to explicate medieval texts, though this patristic exegetical approach has since often been discounted. See D.W. Robertson, \textit{A Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives} (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1962).
of “author”—auctor, rather than actor, as Minnis explains, an authority figure worth of credence—in these same bodies of scholastic commentary. Minnis’ study follows the commentaries and accessus ad auctores—prologues which introduced a text and its author—to unpack the conceptual categories through which medieval exegetes interpreted first scripture, and then also secular texts, a scholasticism sprung from the so-called twelfth-century renaissance rather than eliding it. These prologues, though there are different varieties, concern themselves both with the formal features of a text and with its interpretation:

They engage in meticulous explication de texte, striving to elicit the meaning of the work and the plan of its arrangement, and to identify all its formal features. In the introductions or prologues (sometimes called accessus) to such textual exposition is found a more theoretical framework … in the course of which the text is evaluated in so far as it has succeeded in reaching the intended objective (…causa finalis), this end and the means thereto being determined by the branch of learning, the pars philosophiae or scientiae, under which the text was subsumed. Here, then, is literary theory of a type which, far from distancing itself from the text, rather provides an analytical programme in accordance with which each and every important work can be analyzed. **Even when such theorizing takes place outside the context of a commentary … the interests and assumptions are essentially hermeneutic.**

The prologues concentrate on overlapping categories of knowledge, including concerns with the person of the author, the structure of the work, then material whence it was drawn—in some cases including the branch of knowledge to which it

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p pertains—and the ultimate use or goal to which it addresses itself. As Minnis and Scott outlined the particular categories of information addressed in the two main types of prologues, their shared main concerns were exposition. They identified the author’s intention in writing, the title of the work, the “stylistic and didactic mode of procedure (modus agendi or modus tractandi),” the order of the text, the pedagogic and/or moral usefulness of the work (utilitas),” subject matter, “and the branch of knowledge to which it belongs (cui parti philosophiae supponitur).” The second model, the Aristotelian prologue, covered four causes: the “efficient cause” (the author or other “motivating agent”), the “material cause” (the author’s materials), the “formal cause” (literary style, form—the forma tractandi and forma tractatus), and the “final cause” (“objective in writing”). The two approaches to medieval literary commentary, then, covered a wealth of common expositionary information, generally focused on the philosophical content and use of the text.

In Minnis’ narrative, theories of authorship developed from scriptural exegesis, originally focused on God as the authorial figure, and attempted to discern textual unity and deeper spiritual meaning. Authorship was an enterprise understood jointly, in which God was the true auctor, but the human author also

9 The parts to these prologues had been set forth already, most notably in R.W. Hunt, The History of Grammar in the Middle Ages: Collected Papers, Studies in the History of the Language Sciences 5 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1980), particularly “The Introduction to the Artes in the Twelfth Century,” 117-144, which volume appears to be cited as the primary source in most subsequent scholarship on the subject. In Minnis, Medieval Theory of Authorship, see 15-33 for an overview of parts of the prologues, and 33-72 for further discussion of their use and permutations.

10 Minnis and Scott, Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism, 2.

11 Minnis and Scott, Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism, 3.
became the focus of discussion, particularly where exegetes were concerned with justifying how the sinful human author—David, to take a single example from scriptural texts, as the ostensible human author of the Psalms—could nonetheless still be an authority.\textsuperscript{12}

Much as the problem of fallibly human authors shadowed literary criticism—thanks to its ultimately theological concerns—so too could the question of a text’s utility be a thorny dilemma, particularly where it further complicated the authors’ credibility as well. What was one, for example, to make of texts addressing sinful subjects? What was to be done with authors like Ovid who wrote on human love? Texts like the \textit{Ars amatoria} and the \textit{Amores}, for example, were more difficult to deem works of \textit{auctoritas} because they “taught the techniques of seduction and intimated that the poet had practiced what he preached.”\textsuperscript{13} An \textit{auctor amans} [an \textit{auctor} and lover] was likewise “a contradiction in terms,” as poetry that lacked moral or ethical significance had no \textit{utilitas} to offer its readers created difficulties for anyone who might wish to establish such works as sources of \textit{auctoritas}.\textsuperscript{14} Even vernacular


\textsuperscript{14} Minnis, “\textit{De Vulgari Auctoritate},” 47.
authors including Dante, Gower, and Chaucer, met the same suspicion, and had to rely on similar master-narratives of authorization based on the valuation of the auctor’s morality and private life as a means of legitimating their verse, in Minnis’ view.\(^\text{15}\) Morally objectionable subject matter, much like problematic behavior on the part of the author, was required to be read allegorically: “Scriptural auctores were read literally, with close attention being paid to those poetic methods which were part of the literal sense; pagan poetae were read allegorically or ‘moralised’\(^\text{16}\) and the “human love object” replaced or equated with an “edifying personification.”\(^\text{17}\) In privileging the human author, moreover, and the ways in which authors understood and authorized their own enterprise, Minnis clarifies the varying degrees of authority and responsibility available to differing modes of textual production, four levels of ‘authorship’: scriptor, commentator, compilator, and auctor.\(^\text{18}\) These meant very specific things: the scriptor—scribe—copied another’s text; the commentator explicated it. A compilator collected together the works of other authors without adding his own material—distinct from a commentator—the auctor composed works principally of his own materials. Here, again, these theories of authorship extended to vernacular writers; In Minnis’


\(^{16}\) Minnis, Medieval Theory of Authorship, 142.


\(^{18}\) Minnis, Medieval Theory of Authorship, 94-117.
estimation of vernacular English poets, *compilator* becomes particularly useful for discussions of medieval authorship, as many stylize themselves as compilers collecting together the *auctoritas* of others and adding only a little material of their own. Minnis argues, for example, that Gower is a compiler who presents himself as an *auctor* and Chaucer the opposite—an auctor who “hid behind the shield and defense of the compiler.”

Perhaps most importantly, these books illuminated the myriad ways in ways in which historically relevant (that is to say, not anachronistic, developed out of contemporary assumptions about literariness) theories of medieval literary interpretation were not so hermeneutically determined as to establish a single controlling basis for all of medieval literature. Minnis himself, particularly in collected works—primary source anthologies of medieval literary criticism, and collections of essays—is careful to stress that the larger picture of literary theory in the Middle Ages is still quite vast and unknown. In *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism c. 1100-1375: The Commentary Tradition*, Minnis and his co-editor A. B. Scott observe that “It would be impossible to cover adequately the whole range of medieval literary theory and criticism in a single anthology ... the commentary-tradition, indeed, is so rich and varied itself that we cannot claim to be comprehensive even in dealing with it alone.” Almost twenty years later—more

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than twenty, in fact, after *Medieval Theory of Authorship* was published—Minnis and Ian Johnson observed that the true scope of the field meant that the collection of essays in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism Volume II: The Middle Ages* still could not discuss every variation on medieval reading practices. Any attempt to fully cover the subject must be inevitably a compromise, particularly as these theories were disseminated from scripture, Latin school texts, and classical Latin poetry to work in the vernaculars:

The relationship between vernacular literary theory and *Latinitas* is highly complicated. Certain traditions basically transmit Latin terms and values, while others transform them; some use Latin along with their vernacular to express theoretical interests and values which had little if anything to do with Latin literary theory, while within others vernacular theoretical discourse seems to enjoy a remarkable amount of intellectual autonomy. ... Suffice it to conclude with frank admission that much is still to be done, including further research on the traditions that are represented in the chapters that follow. If the study of medieval literary theory and criticism has developed beyond its infancy ... it is still some way from full maturity.\(^{21}\)

A full understanding of medieval literary theory might be sketched “with world enough and time—and a more capacious *Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*”\(^{22}\)—but more than twenty years after medieval schoolroom texts, accessus to classical and scriptural authors were recognized as the foundation of medieval literary criticism, that moment still has not come to pass.


\(^{22}\) Minnis and Johnson, *Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, 12.
These qualifications should be exciting. They invite further study into those areas left unexplored, into the ways which authors transform schoolroom commentaries, but perhaps more significantly, into aspects of the picture which stand apart from the “ethical poetic,” or from reading practices concerned with philosophical utility. What other kinds of textual encounters were available to readers—what other materials can we glean them from? The commentary tradition represents the physical track of one kind of textual interaction, drawn from various kinds of paratextual commentary, including glosses, both marginal and interlinear—but they cannot cover every iteration of readerly and scribal notation. What, in short, other pictures of reading might we discover with world enough and time, and perhaps an archival research budget?

Here, we return to the afterlives of the critical work done in Allen’s and Minnis’ books. Call it the tyranny of impressive scholarship: the weight of evidence they adduce in support of the very real import of academic prologues to classical and medieval authors seems to outweigh the thoughtful nuances that qualify their work so as to avoid return to reductivism. Much of the subsequent scholarship, eager to explore the ways in which aspects of academically-generated literary theory applies to particular authors, vernaculars, cultures, must of necessity track practices that accord with the general framework in the prologues; to seek rupture would be counter-productive. Current conceptions of medieval reading practices continue to begin from an assertion of alterity: medieval readers, they contend, were concerned not with ‘literature’ as modern readers understand it, but with ethics, a rich intellectual category sprung from biblical exegesis and scholastic
commentaries on classical poetry, which encompassed formal commentary, subordinated to discussions of the work’s value to the philosophical field of ethics.

Thus the wealth of scholarship that springs from this foundation reads in some ways like watching an episode of “Medieval Literary Criticism: This Is Your Life!”, filled with iterations of medieval literary criticism’s encounters with various other vernaculars, traditions, materia, productions.

In addressing the thus-far unspoken or yet to be uncovered facets of medieval literary criticism, this dissertation takes a two-fold approach. It seeks first

to trace literary critical practices enabled by the vernacular authors generally thought to work within scholastically-determined models—in this case, in the manuscripts of Chaucer’s poetry—which work against medieval literary criticism’ (as currently understood) emphasis on clear explication of correct textual meaning and its abiding concern with the moral authority and philosophical utility of a text.

The second track which this dissertation follows concerns the reading practices of later readers of Chaucer’s poetry which grow out of ethical reading and the role of assimilatio. While Boyce Allen is very clear to explain its importance to the theoretical poetics he expounds, he leaves the actual mechanisms of thought by which assimilatio works “wonderfully underspecified,”24 wonderfully so for Johnson because of the way it becomes generative for later English writers; likewise wonderfully for the purposes of this dissertation because it proves similarly generative for scholars attempting to discern the operational wisdom of readers’ annotations. A note on terminology: through this dissertation, I use the terms “scholastic” and “ethical” to discuss the models of reading and criticism to which this dissertation responds. I generally use “scholastic” to address theories of interpretation that rely on the kinds of moral authority and philosophical utility outlined in the medieval accessus, and which privilege clear textual explication. I use “ethical” somewhat polemically, with the specific intention of highlighting the mimetic aspect of the concept of assimilation, particularly as audiences relate to poetry. However, the two concepts necessarily overlap, as they are drawn from

24 Eleanor Johnson, Practicing Literary Theory, 2.
many of the same sources, and are at times used somewhat interchangeably, or according to different criteria, in the scholarship to which I respond. As this dissertation attempts to respond to the structures of thought that undergird current understanding of medieval literary criticism, it of necessity flattens the subtleties and intricacies of many of the individual iterations of what I have continued, following Minnis’ and others’ model, to refer to as “medieval literary criticism”; this is unavoidable, but also offers clear illustration of the differences between the reading practices I uncover—and in this term, I group also those which are enabled by theoretical choices made by medieval authors, as they too necessarily overlap—as well as the points of departure for these practices. It remains then to delineate the parameters of those structures of thought which continue to endure in discussions of medieval literary criticism, along these twinned modes of textual interaction, the scholastic and the ethical. For the former, I take Minnis and Johnson’s *Cambridge History of Literary Criticism* as a first point of departure here, as it remains both the most comprehensive and broad survey of the subject, as well as one of the most recent, and I concentrate—as the goal is to explore conceptual persistence—on scholarship published within the past ten years.

Subsequent scholarship exercises considerable freedom to explore the subtleties and nuance in these further iterations of medieval literary criticism, but it still takes as its basis the underlying emphases on the philosophical utility of the work and the morality of the human author and his or her material. Martin Irvine traces the history of *grammatica*, that branch of medieval thought, he claims, which comes closest to literary criticism in the modern sense, and which likewise develops
in the medieval schoolroom. Ralph Hanna, Tony Hunt, R.G. Keightly, Alastair Minnis, and Nigel F. Palmer’s detailed study of the Latin commentary tradition in Minnis and Johnson’s *Cambridge History of Literary Criticism* reveals at its foundations the expectation that medieval literary criticism unwaveringly seeks the clear explication of textual meaning. The goal of exposition via translation so as to ease comprehension of texts that are “too obscure” in Latin; “gloss” clearly carries a similar valence, meaning explanatory or expositionary marginal additions. Translations, glosses, additions, commentaries, all were meant, ostensibly, to reveal a hidden inner sense, and “spared no pains in ensuring the fullest understanding of their original texts by their readers.” Even where this commentary is transformative it is still within the theoretical parameters set by commentary based on scholastic tradition, the academic prologues: “In other cases the amplification of a school-text takes it far beyond the realms of traditional commentary, resulting in a transformation rather than a translation of the original and its glosses. An excellent example of this process is the French *Ovide moralisé* [in which] an anonymous Franciscan … took the existing structure of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and recompiled its

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27 Hanna et al., “Latin commentary tradition,” 364-383; Irvine, “*Grammatica* and literary theory,” 16, assigns glosses to “*enarratio*,” the branch of *grammatica* concerned with exposition.

constituent parts, inserting explanations of the moral and allegorical significance of each part.”

Likewise, the morality of immoral *materia*—vernacular poetry of human love—remained a thorn in the side of the literary theorist, as vernacular poets sought to adapt the literary authority of Latin commentaries for themselves—an act of “*translatio auctoritatis.*”

Kevin Brownlee, Tony Hunt, Ian Johnson, Nigel F. Palmer, and James Simpson pick up the narrative thread in vernacular literature. Their chapter betrays the persistence of these same twinned emphases on authority and explication: they note intricate literary debates—in which Chaucer’s texts at times persisted—over the comparative valuations on “truth derived from literary authority” and “the truth that could be gained from experience,” but these debates still take as a foundational given the significance of veracity. The authors, intriguingly, note an increased interest on vernacular authors’ parts in their audiences’ roles in understanding their texts. Yet even as they allow space for readers’ experiences and expertise to influence the reception of their texts, they, according to the narrative of current scholarship, nonetheless do so from a perspective that remains invested in reading and interpretation as the means to a particular profit: “there are many

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commonplaces that specify the intended effect of the work on the audience. Medieval literature is very frequently instrumental, designed to have a particular effect on its audience, of moral or intellectual ‘information’ or of affective persuasion.” Medieval authors had at their disposal a number of strategies through which to ensure as much as possible that readers understood that particular effect or meaning, ranging in sophistication to the outright explanation of meaning at the end of a story to theories which “posit[ed] the perception of meaning as being dependent on the intuition of the author’s intention, which is not adequately embodied in the actual text,” and which the authors often fervently—and formulaicly—prayed audiences would be able to discern. There is a great deal of fluidity in the communication of textual meaning, and numerous instances of this more sophisticated approach very clearly leave space for the reader to interpret the text as they may, but undergirding that space is the clear indication that there is some singular, orthodox intended meaning, however unspoken, which the reader is meant to understand.

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34 Brownlee et al., “Vernacular literary consciousness,” 446.

35 Brownlee et al., “Vernacular literary consciousness,” 442. Brownlee et al. observe, “That interpretive ‘insight’ is required for many Middle English works is certain from the frequency with which writers claim that they have an ‘entention’ or ‘purpose’, which may or may not be made explicit,” a “reciprocal obligation of author and audience concerning the sens [that] is frequently derived from biblical sources and principles of patristic exegesis” (444); here the influence of the accessus and commentaries at the foundation of medieval literary criticism are palpable. In particular, the authors note many examples of “meanings being imposed on stories in an authoritarian way ... where meaning is simply presented to a presumably compliant audience” but likewise “many cases in which the burden of judgment is explicitly presented as being left to the audience” (445). The Decameron has a “particularly striking instance” but it indicates that stories are
Vernacular literary theoretical writing likewise proved generative of a school of literary criticism compiled, as were the theories expounded in Allen’s and Minnis’ original studies, from the ways that medieval vernacular prologues indicated that texts were meant to be read. The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory, 1280-1520, demonstrates the sophistication of the manifold approaches English authors took direct readers’ consumption of their texts: they indicated whether texts were to be read all the way through, or piecemeal; whether readers might read superficially or ruminatively. Authors excused their own ignorance, or their use of the vernacular instead of Latin, often emphasizing the communicative reach of the vernacular. The authors of the many excerpts anthologized in this book, generally work within the authorizing modes that one well-versed in scholastic models of interpretation might expect, appropriating Latin authoritative discourse and translating it to their own ends. At times they even borrowed the Latin vocabulary of the accessus, as in the case of Thomas Usk, who declares in his Testament of Love that “this boke shal be of love, and the pryme

“harmful or useful, depending on the listener” which nonetheless forms value judgment in which there is a right or wrong way to read.

36 Wogan-Browne, et al., The Idea of the Vernacular. Of the manifold instances of these tropes, see for example, “The Orchard of Syon,” 235-38, which figures its directives as a stroll through the titular metaphorical orchard of the text; “Dives and Pauper,” 250-51; Nicholas Love, The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ, 252-55.


causes of sterynge in that doynge." The theory of vernacular literary criticism compiled from these texts, then, remains resolutely concerned with the underlying premises of scholastically-derived literary theories.

Among particular vernacular authors, Dante is generally regarded as the medieval literary critic and commentator par excellence, his auto-exegesis—and the poet's own works—sterling examples of these concerns, which contribute much to this discussion. Indeed, Dante employed his own critical vocabulary nuancing exegetical ideas of allegory for vernacular poetry, differentiating “the allegory of the poets” from that of the theologians; in vernacular literature, there was only one allegorical sense: the moral. Boccaccio’s critical work—his commentaries on Dante’s work, The Genealogy of the Gentile Gods, and his own auto-exegesis—are likewise considered of a piece with the valuations and critical assumptions of

39 In Wogan-Browne, et al., The Idea of the Vernacular, see Thomas Usk, The Testament of Love, 28-34. Usk is discussing here the subject matter of his text, not its Aristotelian causes, yet his adoption of language echoing these prologues is intriguing.


41 Minnis and Scott, Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism, 383.
but in Latin as well—the complex Latin apparatus in his Confessio Amantis, "a means by which Gower create[d] his own auctoritas." Richard Rolle, too, was driven by the need to establish his own authority in his Latin and English works. Chaucer himself likewise occupies his own position in this subsequent scholarship as auto-exegete and literary theorist. His poetry is often explicated according to the parameters set forth by Boyce Allen and Minnis—including by those authors themselves—and subsequent scholarship likewise attempts to think through his work in this light. Interestingly, Chaucer, for as much as he has been thought to adopt scholastic modes of literary criticism, also appears critical of the unimpeachable authority bestowed upon classical auctores—the foundation of scholastic literary criticism—and in his multiple dream vision poems, manipulates the genre’s inherent hermeneutic multiplicity in generative ways. Chaucer may not have been a scholastic thinker himself, but he was apparently aware enough of its theories to employ or reject them as he saw fit. It is perhaps not surprising, then,


that we begin to find alternate textualities embedded in the material form of Chaucer’s poetry.

Even the more recent scholarship on medieval literary criticism, as it seeks to qualify ethics, does not depart from the underlying premises of the scholastic models. Eleanor Johnson understands ethics to:

... encompass both the inward-focused and the outward focused modes of right behavior, both the personally salvific and the prosocial. Civic ethics, as we will see, is not segregable from spiritual ethics, so that poets whose works ‘pertain to ethics’ are often thinking first about the transformation of the human soul toward God or toward self-understanding and second about the possibility of ethically transformative action in a larger social arena.50

Jessica Rosenfeld’s valorization of the ethical virtues of pleasure—a critical point of view she shares with Glending Olsen who likewise has argued in favor of the critical place of enjoyment in medieval reading—works from definition of “ethical action” that happens when “the highest goal of the human subject ... coalesces in one perfected, eternal instance of love for the divine object.”51 Two trends should be coming quite clear in this discussion. First, that current discussions of medieval literary criticism continue to work on expanding the reach of the conceptual structures already elaborated in foundational studies on medieval literary criticism, which are drawn from academic texts that, by virtue of their own productional contexts have certain priorities and interests that do not necessarily apply to all

50 Johnson, Practicing Literary Theory, 2.

51 Rosenfeld, Ethics and Enjoyment, 17.
medieval readers or audiences. Second, that these structures endure in insistence of the value of morality-based authority of both human author and textual \textit{materia,}
which likewise inform a particular philosophical significance in, and utility of, the
text, as well as an assertion of the importance of clearly delineating textual meaning
so as to help readers arrive at that \textit{causa finalis} or objective.

These lead us, essentially, back to this dissertation’s twin concerns with respect to illuminating Chaucerian manuscripts’ points of development and rupture: what alternate modes of textuality does Chaucer employ? And what new potential reading practices are witnessed by his readers’ annotations? Chapters One and Two explore Chaucerian alternative hermeneutics in the form of the Latin source glosses to the poet’s verse. Chapter One focuses on early Chaucerian marginalia, in two fifteenth-century copies of \textit{Troilus and Criseyde}. It argues for the potential for reading a hermeneutic of ambiguity into the marginalia in this earlier text, a nascent form of the more larger and more complex body of Latin glosses which accompanies The Canterbury Tales. The \textit{Tales} glosses have been shown to operate on multiple different levels of intertextuality and interpretation, without delineating any particular orthodox intertext or meaning—a departure from scholastic modes of commentary and interpretation. This chapter concludes that the glosses’ full potential to enact the unrestrained proliferation of multiple valid interpretations is not realized to the extent seen in The Canterbury Tales glosses, likely in relation to the particulars of the intertextual referents—here, a more ambiguous intertextuality based on mythological figures, rather than scriptural quotation—on which the hermeneutic is dependent. Nonetheless, it represents an important antecedent to
the *Tales* glosses, one which demonstrates, among other things, the endurance in Chaucer’s operational textualities of an investment in modes of reading that stood aside from scholastic literary concerns.

Chapter Two argues that the hermeneutic alterities enabled in the Chaucer glosses—which involved a complex series of interpretive moves in which readers must recognize and read across multiple texts in English and Latin, recalling at the same time the larger contexts of each, before choosing for themselves how to interpret the poem—were in fact nonetheless recognized as such by medieval audiences. It does so by tracking the responses of later professional readers—scribes and patrons—who demonstrate anxieties over the glosses’ hermeneutic ambiguity and react by engaging in series of editorial changes which foreground particular kinds of textual authorities in order to foreclose the glosses’ interpretive possibilities and restrain the avenues of textual realignment along which the glosses’ hermeneutic works. The chapter concentrates, in particular, on two threads of revision. The first, in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale *fonds anglais* 39, The Canterbury Tales manuscript owned by Jean d’Angoulême, addresses the challenges of authority in the *Tales* glosses by visually privileging the Latin source materials, bringing the glosses into the margin and copying them in a larger, more formal script, so that the manuscript’s *ordinatio* resembles rather a compilation of classical Latin auctores with vernacular exposition than a vernacular text complicated by shifting intertexts. The second thread of marginalia revision concerns a series of restrictions made to the glosses in two manuscripts copied by the same scribe, which directs readers toward a single supposedly authoritative intertext signaled
through a combination of citation, fuller source quotation, and, at times, the
supplantation of individual glosses for others which the scribe preferred.

Chapters Three and Four provide two contrasting case studies of a single
manuscript, British Library MS Harley 2392, a copy of *Troilus and Criseyde* with
extensive Latin readers’ marginalia. Previous scholarship has considered it a
standard example of scholastic literary criticism which rescripts the poem as a
moral handbook on love. Chapter Three considers this interpretation, ultimately
asserting that while it may satisfy for certain glosses, it does not appear to
holistically represent the marginalia’s critical campaign. Rather, Chapter Four
argues, Harley 2392’s marginalia represent an extensive witness to an affective
literary response to the poem. As such, it explores ways in which the manuscript
productively narrows our understanding of at least one of the vehicles by which
ethical reading enables *assimilatio*. It explores the kinds of literacies associated with
affective theology and meditation devotion, which are typically understood strictly
as devotional practices, and not associated with secular literary consumption.
Ultimately, it claims, the Harley 2392 glosses demonstrate similar reading practices
applied to vernacular poetry, working as a form of mimetic self-understanding and
refashioning; if the manuscript is a handbook on love, it achieves this purpose not
through the explication of moral *exempla* but through meditative engagement and
identification with the represented interiorities of the poem’s characters.
1.3 Middle English Manuscript Studies

First, however, before delving into the particulars of these manuscripts’ individual instances of alternative medieval critical theories, it is necessary to cover some brief overview of the extant manuscripts of Chaucer’s poetry and of the types of marginalia common to Middle English manuscripts. There are sixteen manuscripts of *Troilus and Criseyde* and eighty-three of The Canterbury Tales. These manuscripts were copied as early as the end of the fourteenth-century, some by scribes whose hands are identified in a number of Middle English literary

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Of the *Troilus* manuscripts, fifteen contain some marginalia, with extensive Latin marginalia in eight; of the copies of the *Tales*, only eleven have no glossing, while thirty-one contain some significant form of the poem’s appendix of Latin glosses. Here, I think it necessary to offer some clarification on terminology: in this dissertation I understand the term “marginalia” broadly, indicating any marginal addition to a text, including pen trials, ownership marks, and illustrations.

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56 These eight manuscripts are: Cambridge, University Library MS Gg.4.27; Cambridge, Saint John’s College MS L.1; London, British Library MSS Harley 2280, Harley 2392, and Harley 4912; Oxford, Bodleian Library MSS Rawlinson Poet. 163, Arch. Selden B.24, and Arch. Selden, Supra 56. In addition, the following contain a brief readers notes: Cambridge Corpus Christi College MS 61; Durham, University Library, MS Cosin V.II.13 London, British Library MSS Additional 12044 and Harley 1239; New York, Pierpont Morgan Library M. 817 (formerly the Campsall manuscript); Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Digby 181; San Marino, Huntington Library MS HM 114 (formerly Phillipps 8252). For a brief catalogue of the manuscripts with glosses, see C. David Benson and Barry A. Windeatt, “The Manuscript Glosses to Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*,” *Chaucer Review* 25 (1990): 33-53, at 34-36.

57 Manuscripts with larger bodies of significant glossing include: Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 392D (commonly known as the Hengwrt MS); Austin, University of Texas Library, MS 143; Cambridge, University Library, MS Dd.4.24; Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.3.15; Chicago, University of Chicago Library, MS 564; Lichfield Cathedral, MS 2; Lincoln Cathedral, MS 110; London, British Library, MS Additional 5140, MS Additional 35286, MS Egerton 2864, MS Harley 1758, MS Lansdowne 851, MS Sloane 1685; London, Royal College of Physicians, MS 388; Manchester, John Rylands University Library MS English 113; New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M249; Northumberland MS 455; Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 198; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton donat. 1, MS Laud Misc. 600, MS Rawl. Poet. 141, MS Rawl. poet. 149, MS Rawl. Poet. 223, MS Arch. Selden. B.14; Oxford, New College MS 314; Oxford, Trinity College, MS 49; Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds anglais 39; Petworth House MS 7; Philadelphia, Rosenbach Museum and Library, MS f. 1084/1; San Marino, Huntington Library, MS Ellesmere 26 C.9; Tokyo, collection of T. Takamiya, MS 32 (formerly the Delamere MS). For a fuller account of the glossed manuscripts, see Stephen Partridge, *Glosses in the Manuscripts of The Canterbury Tales: an Edition and Commentary* (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1992), II.
By gloss, I refer to those marginalia that supplement the text through the addition of some further material, lexical, grammatical, or citational.\textsuperscript{58} I thus widen its application from such discussions of vernacular glossing as Minnis’ “Absent Glosses: A Crisis of Vernacular Commentary in Late-Medieval England?” which understands the term within the narrower framework of scholastic commentary.\textsuperscript{59} As such, “gloss” here can refer to any number of marginal or interlinear notes, lexical clarifications, readers’ reactions, source quotations and citations, and tangential comments, even those which stray far from the bounds of commentary as defined by current scholarship on medieval literary criticism and authorship theory.

1.4 Marginalia Types

A little further elucidation of the form of The Canterbury Tales glosses, whose authorship has been more thoroughly assessed and assigned to Chaucer, and which I discuss in greater detail in Chapter One, offers a valuable point of departure. The vast majority of the marginalia in manuscripts of both poems display a number of different types of reader interaction with the text, falling within the four general categories of annotation Kathryn Kerby-Fulton outlines in “The Professional Reader as Annotator”: \textbf{narrative reading aids}, including topic and source markers, plot summaries, and even lexical and grammatical glossing; \textbf{ethical pointers}, which might include precepts or exhortations to the audience; \textbf{polemical comments},

\textsuperscript{58} See, for instance, the discussion in Kerby-Fulton, et. al., \textit{Opening Up}, 214–215.

comprising political and social responses to the text; and **literary responses**, addressing genre, rhetorical figures, and discussion of the author.\(^6\) Table 1.1 below should offer some clarification:

### TABLE 1.1

**MARGINALIA TYPES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annotation Type</th>
<th>Annotated Text in <em>Riverside Chaucer</em></th>
<th>Annotation Text[^61^]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Reading Aids</td>
<td>“And finally at request and preyere / of Perotheus, withouten any raunsoun, / Duc Theseus hym leet out of prisoun” (I.1204-1206)</td>
<td>“How Arcite was delivered out of prisoune” (Ha3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“For myn entyte nys but for to pleye.” (III.192)</td>
<td>“Bihold how this goode Wyf seued hir iij. firste housboundes whiche were goode olde men” (El, Ad3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plot Summaries</td>
<td>“Now wol I telen of my fourthe housbonde.” (III.480)</td>
<td>“Secundus Maritus” (Ad1, En3, Ma)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic Markers</td>
<td>“Placebo seyde, “O Januarie, brother” (IV.1478)</td>
<td>“Placebo” (El, Ad1, Ad3, En3, Gg)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“O perilous fyr, that in the bedstraw bredeth!” (IV.1783)</td>
<td>“Auctor” (El, Ad1, Ad3, Bo2, Ch, Cn, Dd, El, En3, Gg, Ha4, Hg, Ma, Ra2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Markers</td>
<td>“We stryve as did the houndes for the boon” (I.1177)</td>
<td>“Exemplum” (Ad1 and En3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical Markers</td>
<td>“That þat” (VII.2786)</td>
<td>“Mod quod” (Dd)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Me mette how that I romed up and doun” (VII.2898)</td>
<td>“Dreem” (Dd)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical and Lexical</td>
<td>“For lyk the moone ay wexe ye and wane!” (IV.998)</td>
<td>“nota bene de inconstantia populi” (Py)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Pointers</td>
<td>“Swere and lyen, as a woman kan.” (III.228)</td>
<td>“verum est” (Dd)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polemical Responses</td>
<td>“How greet a sorwe suffreth now Arcite!” (I.1219)</td>
<td>“be Complaint of Arcite” (Ha3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary Responses</td>
<td>“God bad us for to wexe and multiplye” (III.28)</td>
<td>“crescite et multiplicamini” (Ad3, El, Ra1, Tc2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^61^] For the sake of brevity, I refer here to the various *Canterbury Tales* manuscripts by their traditional sigla; see *Riverside Chaucer*, 1118-1119 for fuller identification of the manuscripts in question and Partridge, Section 3, for consideration of which manuscripts carry significant glossing.
Narrative reading aids in The Canterbury Tales might include summaries of the plot (Carl Grindley’s III-NRA-SM and at times, III-NRA-T),\(^\text{62}\) in Middle English as does, for example, Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Arch. Selden B.14’s (Se) copy of the “Knight’s Tale,” which marks Theseus’ destruction of Thebes at CT I.922 with the marginal note “here Duc Theseus distroyed Thebes,” or Ellesmere and British Library MS Additional 35286’s (Ad3) observation, at III.193 in the “Wife of Bath’s Prologue,” “Bihold how this goode Wyf serued hir .iiij. firste housboundes whiche were goode olde men” or Latin, as when British Library MSS Additional 5140 and Egerton 2864, and Manchester, John Rylands University Library MS English 113 (hereafter Ad1, En3, and Ma, respectively) all note, at III.480, “Secundus Maritus.”\(^\text{63}\) These reading aids could also include speech markers (Grindley’s III-NRA-DP), in one of two forms. They might incorporate glosses identifying characters who are speaking at a given moment in the text—“The Merchant’s Tale” offers an excellent example of this first type of speech marker: five different manuscripts include

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\(^\text{62}\) See Carl James Grindley, “Reading Piers Plowman C-Text Annotation: Notes toward the Classification of Printed and Written Marginalia in Texts from the British Isles 1300-1641,” in The Medieval Professional Reader at Work: Evidence from Manuscripts of Chaucer, Langland, Kempe, and Gower, edited by Kathryn Kerby-Fulton and Maidie Hilmo (Victoria, BC: University of Victoria, 2001), 73-141. While I do not categorize The Canterbury Tales glosses along the same, more detailed taxonomy which Grindley provides to account for the full scope of readers’ responses to Piers Plowman, it does provide a useful framework from which to understand the complexities of contemporaneous approaches to medieval poetry, and can help, here, demonstrate the breadth of marginalia likewise witnessed in Chaucer’s verse.

\(^\text{63}\) Partridge, Glosses, I-15 and III-10. For the sake of brevity, I refer here to the various Canterbury Tales manuscripts by their traditional sigla; see Riverside Chaucer, 1118-1119 for fuller identification of the manuscripts in question and Partridge, section 3, for consideration of which manuscripts carry significant glossing.
glosses distinguishing between the words of Justinius and Placebo by placing the speaker's name in the margins next to his dialogue. Speech markers might also take the form of marginalia that read "Auctor" and appear to identify the intrusion of a narrator figure; these "Auctor" glosses occur, with little exception, at moments described by Stephen Partridge as "highly rhetorical"—often apostrophaic speeches—where none of the Tales characters appear to be speaking. Here, again, "The Merchant’s Tale" is a sterling example: across the manuscript tradition, the tale receives five "Auctor" glosses; one, at IV.1783, is present in thirteen manuscripts, including Ellesmere.

Narrative reading aids, in Grindley’s taxonomy, may also include marginal notes that identify, but do not comment on, rhetorical devices (III-NRA-RD). Some manuscripts of the Tales include glosses that distinguish rhetorical divisions and figures in the text: Ad1 and En3 observe the presence of an "Exemplum" in the "Knight’s Tale" while British Library MS Harley 7333 (Ha3) marks "†e Complaint of Arcite" and "†e lamentacion of Palamon." They may also include grammatical or lexical glosses (Grindley’s II-NRA-TR) number of manuscripts include interlinear glosses offering Latin explanations of difficult English words—or, in the case of Cambridge University Library MS Dd.4.24 (Dd), somewhat grammatically confusing

64 Partridge, Glosses, 1-4.
65 Partridge, Gloses, IV-13-IV-14. The five manuscripts which mark discursive shifts between Justinus and Placebo in the début portion of the poem are Ellesmere; British Library MSS Additional 5140, Additional 35286, and Egerton 2864; and Cambridge, University Library Gg.4.27, one of the glossed Troilus manuscripts. The "Auctor" glosses can also be found in the "Man of Law's Prologue" and "Tale," the "Clerk's Tale" and the "Prioress' Tale".
phrases, such as the phrase “That †at,” which is translated “id quod” in order to sort out the repetitive-looking relative pronoun.66

Ethical pointers and polemical responses in The Canterbury Tales manuscripts vary considerably in form, as they make up a considerable percentage of the poem’s annotations. As such, I give only a select few examples from the two types. Dd displays a number of polemical responses, as where the annotator observes, “verum est” when the Wife of Bath makes particularly antifeminist claims (Grindley’s III-PR-SC). London, Royal College of Physicians MS 388 (Py) offers us one example of Tales marginalia’s ethical pointers, urging readers of the “Clerk’s Tale” to “nota bene de inconstantia populi” at IV.998 (Grindley’s II-EP-EXP).67

The final set of Canterbury Tales marginalia, found as well in Troilus and Criseyde, is the one which has garnered the most critical attention: the series of Latin quotations from Chaucer’s sources.68 The last of these categories, the source glosses, are comprised of quotations from a text’s source materials. In the case of the glosses to Chaucer’s poetry, these are in Latin quotations from the classical, scriptural, and patristic sources that shape the intertextual reception of Troilus and Criseyde and The Canterbury Tales. These glosses form the foundation of the

66 Partridge, Glosses, VII-5.
67 Partridge, Glosses, IV-7.
68 This would appear to fall into Grindley’s III-NRA-S and –C subtypes, and indeed he does briefly discuss the “Wife of Bath’s Prologue” marginalia here. I would, however, tentatively classify them instead as literary response, engaging in subtle, at times ironic or subversive, commentary on the text, as I will discuss below.
alternative medieval literary critical practices this dissertation explores, and as such, it is to these that I turn now.
CHAPTER 2:
MULTI-DIMENSIONAL READING IN TWO MANUSCRIPTS OF TROILUS AND CRISEYDE

2.1 Introduction

The marks medieval readers left in the margins of their manuscripts are often inscrutable to those of us who, centuries later, encounter their comments. The often-extensive commentaries gracing manuscripts of Scripture, and of classical poetry, may teach readers how to interpret the texts they append, but many readers’ marginalia refuse to disclose explicitly their composer’s motives, some organizing agenda or interpretive backbone. Notae, speech markers, and the quotation and citation of sources may have been perfectly clear to the hand that penned them, but modern readers must piece together clues to form pictures of textual reception that dwell more on potentialities than demonstrable actualities: commentaries might just as likely fail to register with medieval readers as announce a particular hermeneutic enterprise. Yet these abstruse fragments of writing are often visibly marked as an intrinsic part of the manuscript mise en page, ruled much like the central text, framed by parahs or colored ink, sometimes visually linked by bracketing lines to associated passages in the body of the text. The interpretive difficulties which belie their significance invite, nonetheless, further exploration.
This is quintessentially true of the Latin source glosses in manuscripts of Chaucer’s poetry. In copies of his major poems—both *The Canterbury Tales* and *Troilus and Criseyde*—quotations from the poet’s Latin sources demonstrate the fascinating potential to enable a hermeneutic of indeterminacy that offers readers multiple conflicting contexts within which to understand Chaucer’s poetry. The glosses’ inscrutability, however, resists tidy exposition, and modern scholarship often focuses, rather, on the more objectively traceable questions of authorship and transmission, identifying earlier and presumably more authoritative versions of the apparatus, and arguing (mostly conclusively) for the Latin source glosses’ Chaucerian origins.\(^69\) In light of recent critical forays, then, into the less-charted territory of *The Canterbury Tales* glosses’ potential functions, we can now productively venture further: to explore the hermeneutics of the largely-undiscussed authorial glosses to *Troilus and Criseyde*, and map the track of their ties to the *Tales* glosses and the evolution of Chaucer’s marginal enterprise. Though in many ways formally quite different from their later instantiation, these *Troilus* glosses likewise divulge the potential for practices of reading that, standing apart

from the scholastic models derived from scriptural exegesis, encouraged readers’ complicated and self-determined investment in the interpretation of the poem.

2.2 The Canterbury Tales Marginalia as Chaucerian Enterprise

The glosses in manuscripts of Chaucer’s poetry present a number of critical challenges. The scholar who wishes to talk about them is immediately faced with the difficulty of assigning responsibility for their creation, and the vast majority of critical ink expended on the glosses addresses this point of ambiguity, particularly with respect to The Canterbury Tales and its Latin source glossing. The earliest work draws undeniable parallels between marginal quotation from Chaucer’s literary sources and the version of the sources presented in the English verse itself, concluding that they demonstrate a congruence of textual error between gloss and verse that assigns both the source manuscript of the glosses, and that of the Tales, to the same textual tradition—if not arguing that both are derived from one and the same manuscript.70 If, as this line of argumentation indicates, the source of the glosses was a text contained within Chaucer’s own library, the likely scenario is that Chaucer himself, as the person presumably most familiar with both his English verse, its Latin sources, and the correspondence between manuscripts of each, is the

70 Germaine Dempster and Robert E. Lewis, in particular, represent this approach to identifying the author of The Canterbury Tales glosses, with Dempster focusing on patterns of shared error in the “Clerk’s Tale” glosses from Petrarch’s Epistola Griseldis and Lewis discussing quotations from Innocent III’s De contemptu mundi in the margins of the “Man of Law’s Tale”. Though Dempster is more interested in Chaucer’s strict adherence to his Latin source over simpler French models, she does begin from the assertion that they “probably come from the manuscript which Chaucer used, or, at any rate, from one nearer to it than is any of the collated manuscripts.” Dempster, “Chaucer’s Manuscript of Petrarch,” 6; Lewis, “Glosses to the Man of Law’s Tale,” 1-16. See also Pratt, “Chaucer and the Hand that Fed Him,” 619-42.
figure responsible for their addition to his poetry.71 These scholars focus on the Latin source glossing in *The Canterbury Tales*—a series of marginal quotations from Chaucer’s sources—which interact with the English text on a number of intellectual levels, confronting readers with a sort of polyphonic text that offers them multiple possible interpretations of the *Tales*. There are, however, a further two manuscripts that enable the same potential reading experience—two fifteenth-century copies of *Troilus and Criseyde* whose glosses are also attributed to the poet himself. Though the glosses are deployed slightly differently in the two manuscripts, the differences in fact suggest development of a concept of intertextual, polysemous commentary evolving from its earlier, experimental stages in the *Troilus* glosses to their fuller expression in *The Canterbury Tales*.

More recent scholarship on the dissemination of Chaucerian poetry in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries lends further weight to these early explorations of the glosses’ authorship. Linne Mooney’s identification of Adam Pinkhurst as the scribe of the Hengwrt and Ellesmere manuscripts—Chaucer’s

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71 Lewis cogently summarizes this argument—and in the process, the significant critical impact of his and Dempster’s work on the glosses—in his justification of their Chaucerian origin: “The available evidence, therefore, strongly supports the conclusion that the glosses from the *De Miseria* were written either by Chaucer himself from his own manuscript of the work or by a scribe copying from that same manuscript, either under Chaucer’s supervision of shortly after his death. It is more plausible, I think, that the glosses were written during Chaucer’s lifetime than after his death in 1400. If the glosses had been inserted by a scribe after Chaucer’s death, from Chaucer’s manuscript of the *De Miseria* ... one of two situations would have been involved: either Chaucer left definite instructions for the glossing of the *Man of Law’s Tale*, and there is no evidence in the manuscripts of *The Canterbury Tales* that he did; or that the scribe, somehow recognizing exactly which lines were translated from the *De Miseria*, leafed through Chaucer’s copy of Innocent to find the appropriate passages, which appear in four different chapters and two different books of the work. This is a task which, to judge from contemporary comments on scribal habits, one would expect only a very intelligent and conscientious scribe to be willing or able to perform, a conclusion that argues strongly in favor of their authorial, rather than scribal, origin.” Lewis, “Glosses to the Man of Law’s Tale,” 15.
infamous “owen scriveyne,” who worked closely with the poet throughout his professional lifetime—argues for a lengthy, close professional relationship between Pinkhurst and Chaucer that makes it difficult to draw the sort of clear distinction between scribe and poet, which bears much of the weight in debates over the glosses’ composition. If, indeed, the glosses are the work of the scribe of these earlier manuscripts rather than of the poet himself, they would have been added by a colleague perhaps more intimately familiar with Chaucer’s work and the author’s

intentions for his manuscripts’ *mise-en-page* than the earliest scholarship on the
glosses anticipated.

One further factor bolsters scholarly assertions of the glosses’ Chaucerian
origins. Traditionally dated to the first years of the fifteenth century, following
Chaucer’s death, both the Hengwrt and Ellesmere manuscripts’ dating has begun to
be called into question. Reevaluations of the manuscripts on paleographical,
codicological, and art historical grounds argue strongly for dates of composition in
the latter years of the fourteenth century, during the poet’s lifetime.\(^3\) The revised
dating of Hengwrt and Ellesmere increases the likelihood of the glosses deriving
from the poet himself, added from an exemplar he provided to Pinkhurst, or even
under his direct supervision.\(^4\) Though we cannot, then, attribute the text of the
glosses to Chaucer himself with certainty, the developing picture of the copying of

\(^3\) For fourteenth-century datings of the manuscripts, see Kathleen L. Scott, “An Hours and
Psalter by Two Ellesmere Illuminators,” in *The Ellesmere Chaucer: Essays in Interpretation*, edited by
Daniel Woodward and Martin Stevens (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library: 1997): 87-119, which
reevaluates the conventional dating for Ellesmere on art historical grounds, necessitating a similar
reconsideration of Hengwrt’s dating; Norman Blake, “Geoffrey Chaucer and the Manuscripts of The
on the Hengwrt Chaucer,” in *The Hengwrt Chaucer Digital Facsimile*, edited by Estelle Stubbs
(Leicester: Scholarly Digital Editions, 2000); and Daniel Mosser, “Chaucer’s Scribe, Adam, and the
Hengwrt Project,” in *Design and Distribution of Late Medieval Manuscripts in England*, edited by

\(^4\) Blake, Stubbs, and Mosser all embrace, moreover, the likelihood that Chaucer himself
directly supervised the copying of Hengwrt and perhaps also Ellesmere; Mosser even goes so far as to
suggest the possibility that Supplementary Hand B in Hengwrt is that of Chaucer himself, though he
admits that there is no proof of this attribution, merely that it is an “intriguing possibility” based on
Doyle and Parkes’ suggestion that it performs a supervisory function. Blake, “Chaucer and the
Manuscripts of The Canterbury Tales,” 113-14; Stubbs, “Observations on the Hengwrt Chaucer”; and
Mosser, “Adam and the Hengwrt Project,” 36-38. For a discussion of the *mise-en-page* of the
manuscripts, particularly the earliest two, see also Charles Owen Jr., “The Alternative Reading of The
Canterbury Tales: Chaucer’s Text and the Early Manuscripts,” *PMLA* 97 (1982): 237-50, at 242; and
Hengwrt and Ellesmere—and the increasing detail in which we can paint the landscape of late-medieval English literary production—suggest a scenario in which the divide between authorial and scribal contribution to the text is narrow enough to speak with caution of The Canterbury Tales marginalia as Chaucerian enterprise.75

Of the ostensibly authorial Canterbury Tales marginalia, those that have garnered the most critical attention are the series of Latin quotations from Chaucer’s sources. Much of this attention is devoted to deciphering how these glosses function. They have been interpreted variously as learned window-dressing, authorial notes for revision, and the marginal roadmap to a correct, orthodox reading of the potentially objectionable material of texts like the “Wife of Bath’s Prologue,” all interpretations that remain, as Derek Pearsall has suggested, likely significantly impacted by the fact that Hand H, if H is in fact a supplemental scribe, was squeezing corrections into the existing text. Moreover, some of the letter forms are distinctly different, a problem that Sánchez-Martí attributes to Hand H mimicking Pinkhurst’s script, seemingly intermittently, making it difficult to accept the association of the two manuscripts. Most recently, the publication of the excellent online database, Late Medieval English Scribes offers an elucidation of the various letter forms used by these scribes, though it does not identify the majority of them by name. Linne R. Mooney, Estelle Stubbs, et al., Late Medieval English Scribes, www.medievalscribes.com (accessed October 15, 2011). See also Kerby-Fulton et al., Opening Up.

75 For further discussion of the broader picture of the copying of literary texts in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England, see Doyle and Parkes, “The Production of Copies of The Canterbury Tales and the Confessio Amantis,” which identifies certain scribes repeatedly copying the works of Chaucer, Gower, and Langland; Linne Mooney, “Locating Scribal Activity in Late-Medieval London,” in Design and Distribution of Late Medieval Manuscripts in England, edited by Margaret Connolly and Linne R. Mooney (York: York Medieval Press, 2008), 183-204; Estelle Stubbs, “‘Here’s One I prepared Earlier’: The Work of Scribe D on Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 198,” The Review of English Studies, New Series, 58 (2007): 133-53; Jordi Sánchez-Martí, “Adam Pynkhurst’s ‘Necglyence and Rape’ Reassessed,” English Studies 92 (2011): 360-74. Sánchez-Martí argues for the presence of a supplemental hand, termed “Hand H” in the Ellesmere manuscript, which he associates with the scribe of Cotton Nero Ax.—the sole extant copy of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Pearl, Patience, and Cleanness. Tempting though it is to associate the copying of the Cotton manuscript with the circulation of its literary contemporaries, the evidence is far from conclusive: Hand H’s presence in Ellesmere is limited and its ducus—the criterion whence Sánchez-Martí’s identification springs—likely significantly impacted by the fact that Hand H, if H is in fact a supplemental scribe, was squeezing corrections into the existing text. Moreover, some of the letter forms are distinctly different, a problem that Sánchez-Martí attributes to Hand H mimicking Pinkhurst’s script, seemingly intermittently, making it difficult to accept the association of the two manuscripts. Most recently, the publication of the excellent online database, Late Medieval English Scribes offers an elucidation of the various letter forms used by these scribes, though it does not identify the majority of them by name. Linne R. Mooney, Estelle Stubbs, et al., Late Medieval English Scribes, www.medievalscribes.com (accessed October 15, 2011). See also Kerby-Fulton et al., Opening Up.
rather unconvincing. In particular, they do not appear to articulate any single interpretation of the text, instead complicating it in certain equivocating ways. The Latin quotations are often at some odds with the letter of the Middle English verse; juxtaposed with the vernacular text, they undermine the text they gloss, creating interpretive ambiguity rather than delineating a particular meaning. In *The Canterbury Tales*, as Kathryn Kerby-Fulton demonstrates, this ambiguity allows for multiple levels of understanding the English verse, dependent upon the individual reader’s literacy and literary knowledge, and even a reader’s personal preference for the interpretation he or she likes best. This potential for deliberate polysemy

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77 For a detailed treatment of the way this works in *The Canterbury Tales* marginalia, see Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, “Professional Readers at Work: Annotators, Editors and Correctors in Middle English Literary Texts,” in Kerby-Fulton, Hilmo and Olson, *Opening Up Middle English Manuscripts*, 207-44. For the sake of illustration, and as a point of comparison with the *Troilus* marginalia, I offer here one example, from the abundant Latin glossing in “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue”: at III.26-29, the Wife of Bath observes, in defense of her multiple remarriages, that God has commanded her to wax and multiply. In Ellesmere, this is accompanied by the gloss, “Crescite et multiplicamini.” The quotation is not cited but is taken, Kerby-Fulton notes, from Jerome who is himself quoting Genesis 1:28 in his *Against Jovinian*. Medieval readers might, she explains, fill in the rest of the scriptural context—the exhortation to fill the earth—and find humor in the ironic textual interplay. They
in the textual nexus of Chaucerian verse and gloss can be traced as well in *Troilus*, in the Latin source glosses of J and Gg.

Current scholarship on the Chaucer glosses traces the glosses’ difference from other marginalia (Latin and vernacular) in English poetic manuscripts. Chaucer’s contemporary, John Gower, includes a vast Latin apparatus in the *Confessio Amantis*; his Latin paratexts, however—a collection of elegiac verses, prose summaries, and occasional marginal citations of authorities and explanations of allusions in the English text which bears far more resemblance to the hermeneutically-instructive commentaries on Scripture and Latin verse—differ so inherently from Chaucer’s marginalia that Derek Pearsall, in discussing Gower’s texts, summarily dismisses the notion of any connection. More recent scholarship suggests instead that the *Tales* glosses function through the creation of a nexus of ambiguous interpretive space, in which readers face uncited source quotations, potentially drawn from multiple intertexts whose conflicting polemics jostle with one another to establish a single, orthodox interpretation. In the “Wife of Bath’s

might, however, also think of the biblical verse’s use in Chaucer’s direct source—Jerome—which interprets the text in a much darker fashion. The context in Jerome’s work is both physically and spiritually threatening, as Kerby-Fulton explains: readers encountering the Wife of Bath in the context of *Against Jovinian* might remember “that plants needed first “to grow” (*crescere*), so that there would be that afterwards to be cut off (*ut esset quod postea posset excidi*) – a vicious metaphor in a sexual context, suggesting marriage as emasculation ... [and that] that marriage only “fills earth” (*terram replent*) not heaven” (Kerby-Fulton, “Professional Readers at Work,” 217).

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78 Derek Pearsall. “Gower’s Latin in the *Confessio Amantis*, in *Latin and Vernacular: Studies in Late-Medieval Texts and Manuscripts*, edited by Alastair Minnis, York Manuscripts Conferences: Proceedings Series 1 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1989), 13-25. The closest possible comparison comes from Aage Bruendorff’s suggestion that Chaucer’s glosses represent faux-learned window-dressing, an accusation leveled as well at Gower. See Aage Bruendorff, *The Chaucer Tradition* (Oslo, S. L. Møller, 1925), 82. The glosses have also been identified as editorial detritus, an explanation almost as unsatisfying as the idea that they are simply meant to make the text look more learned. For the fullest exposition of this theory, see Silvia, “Glosses to *The Canterbury Tales*,” 28-39.
Prologue,” one of the most extensively glossed texts, Alysoun’s vernacular, and rather liberal exegesis butts up against not only the scriptural texts she quotes, but also their adapted context in Jerome’s Against Jovinian. Her cheerful declaration that scripture advises that it is “better to marry than to burn,” to take one example of many, simultaneously undergirds her defense of remarriage, recalls the exhortation in her Pauline source to widows to remarry only if then cannot remain chaste, and taints this support with Jerome’s overt association of marriage—even first marriage—with prostitution.\(^79\)

In The Canterbury Tales manuscripts, these glosses form a relatively stable textual body that accompanies over thirty copies of the poem, including some of the earliest, and most authoritative. The manuscripts of Troilus and Criseyde, on the other hand, evince little to no consistency between manuscripts, and are not generally attributed to Chaucerian enterprise. Some have Latin marginalia, some vernacular; some show source glossing, some offer summaries of the narrative. There is little cross-over between the annotations in the poem’s various manuscripts; what constants they do demonstrate are too vague to indicate a history of influence.\(^80\) The only demonstrable consistency is the manuscripts’ habit

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80 Almost every manuscript includes, for example, marginalia marking rhetorical divisions in the text. Ardis Butterfield, “Mise-en-Page in the Troilus Manuscripts: Chaucer and French Manuscript Culture.” Huntington Library Quarterly, “Reading from the Margins: Textual Studies, Chaucer, and
of inscribing rhetorical markers—identifying divisions between the narrative and lyrical interludes like the cantici and the epistolae. The overall impression these manuscripts proffer is that of an assembly of individual readers’ notes, more than a unified, potentially authorial textual corpus like that seen in the Tales manuscripts—but with two crucial exceptions. Cambridge, Saint John’s College MS L.i and Cambridge, University Library MS Gg.4.27 share a small set of Latin source glosses attributed, like those in The Canterbury Tales, to the poet himself.\(^81\)

2.3 J, Gg, and the Evolution of Chaucerian Marginalia

Unlike the body of Canterbury Tales glosses that are arguably attributable to Chaucer himself, the potentially authentically Chaucerian glosses in Troilus and Criseyde are very few, totaling only five separate glosses, and are concentrated in a small section of the text. They appear in two manuscripts, both of which post-date the composition of Troilus by several decades, and their text is assigned to the group

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considered deficient or erroneous. Nevertheless, the glosses are tentatively ascribed to Chaucer himself by most critical accounts; the poet clearly used Joseph of Exeter as one of his sources in the composition of *Troilus and Criseyde*, as his descriptions of Troilus, Criseyde, and Diomede all contain details found only in Joseph of Exeter’s text, and none of his other sources.

The first of these manuscripts is Cambridge, Saint John’s College, MS L.1 (hereafter, J). Root dates it to the fifteenth century; Benson and Windeatt narrow this dating somewhat to the middle of the century. It is copied on parchment by one scribe who also provides a number of corrections and the marginalia; a second scribe has added Robert Henryson’s *Testament of Cresseid* in a later hand. The five glosses from Joseph are not the only marginalia copied by the original scribe, though others are few and far between: identifications, in Latin, of figures from Chaucer’s sources—classical and medieval—and a brief quotation from the Aeneid reading, “Audaces / Fortuna iuuat” (Fortune favors the bold), on 76v in a much later hand, where Pandaros counsels Troilus to abduct Criseyde, rather than let her leave

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83 Root argues that Joseph of Exeter’s *Iliad* was the “Dares” that Chaucer used as a source. None of the information included in *Troilus and Criseyde* that is attributable to Dares is not also found in Joseph of Exeter, though there is clearly material in *Troilus* that is taken from Joseph, and is not present in Dares. Moreover, the poem appears to have circulated, in the three manuscripts Root mentions, as *Frigii daretis yliados* (the Westminster MS), *liber Frigii Daredis* (the Oxford MS), or *Frigii daretis yliados* (the Paris MS), all without Joseph’s name, making it very likely that the medieval reader meeting the text in manuscript form would not have any reason to attribute it to him—or to any name, other than Dares. Root, “Chaucer’s Dares,” 4.


Troy.\textsuperscript{86} There are, further, a number of marginal corrections, some quite significant, as at 60v, where a full two stanzas have been added marginally. The scribe underlines the text he considers erroneous, and substitutes his readings in the margins. These are in a later hand, and appear to be the work of the sixteenth-century scribe who has added the \textit{Testament of Cresseid} to the end of the manuscript; as such, they may very well come from a printed edition, possibly the same one as this text of the \textit{Testament}, which Richard Beadle and Jeremy Griffiths identify as that in Speght’s 1602 edition of Chaucer’s \textit{Works}.\textsuperscript{87}

The second manuscript is Cambridge University Library MS Gg.4.27 (hereafter Gg), a collection of Chaucerian and other works. It is copied in “one clear, firm bookhand” which Root dates to the early fifteenth century, with the exception of 35 leaves in a seventeenth-century hand, which add material from printed editions of Chaucer’s work.\textsuperscript{88} Corrections are supplied largely by one contemporaneous hand, though others appear; Gg contains “very few marginal notes.”\textsuperscript{89} Instead, the quotations from Joseph of Exeter are inserted into the text itself by the original scribe, and marked off by a thin bracketing line in the outer margin of the text block and the word \textit{versus}, abbreviated, in the inner margin.\textsuperscript{90}

\textsuperscript{86}All translations are my own, except where otherwise indicated, though I am deeply indebted to Andy Kelly and Max L. Goldman for their gracious and immensely helpful input.

\textsuperscript{87}Cambridge, St. Johns, L.1, xx.

\textsuperscript{88}Root, \textit{Manuscripts}, 13.

\textsuperscript{89}Root, \textit{Manuscripts}, 13; Benson and Windeatt say that there are none (35); CUL MS Gg.4.27 shows no further marginalia in \textit{Troilus}.

\textsuperscript{90}CUL MS Gg.4.27, f.114r.
This change in *mise en page* marks the Latin material, despite its abbreviation, as an integral part of the English verse in a manner not fully achieved when the material is treated marginally. The rest of the *Troilus* is unglossed, but the manuscript contains a few more marginalia—some possibly scribal, some later—in *The Canterbury Tales*. These glosses are of several different types, including—though not limited to—topical annotations identifying the pilgrims in the “General Prologue,” the “illustrious men” of the “Monk’s Tale” or the Seven Deadly Sins of the “Parson’s Tale”; speech markers, whether of characters, as in the *débat* of the “Merchant’s Tale” or the more ambiguous “Auctor”—and in one case, “Naracio”—glosses in the “Clerk’s Tale” and “Merchant’s Tale”; *notae* and manicules in the “Wife of Bath’s Prologue” and “Tale”; and a number of brief Latin quotations in the “Tale of Melibee” and “Nun’s Priest’s Tale,” all of which appear to be in a different hand from that of the original scribe.

These Joseph of Exeter extracts appear in Book V, from V.799 through V.827, by the stanzas where Chaucer pauses the narrative, just as Diomede swears to himself that he will win Criseyde’s affections and, in his efforts to woo her, begins visiting her in her tent. Here, Chaucer inserts a series of three portraits, both of the

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91 Only one other Chaucer manuscript witnesses this kind of shift in *ordinatio*: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS fonds anglais 39 (hereafter Ps), a *Canterbury Tales* manuscript, copied in the first half of the fifteenth century by John Duxworth for Jean d’Angoulême, the brother of Charles d’Orléans, and taken to France by d’Angoulême following his release from England, where he was held hostage until 1445. For further discussion of the manuscript’s provenance, see M. C. Seymour, *A Catalogue of Chaucer Manuscripts* (Aldershot, 1997), 2: 213-216; and Charles Owen, *The Manuscripts of The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer Studies XVII (Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1991), 23-32. In Ps, an abbreviated selection of the corpus of *Tales* glosses—along with a handful of at-times scathing commentaries on the quality of individual tales—are copied into the main text block in a larger, more formal hand than that used for the English verse. The effect is almost one of a collection of Latin *sententiae* governing the compilation of English verse that makes up the *Tales*. 51
physical descriptions and of the characters of Troilus, Criseyde, and Diomedes. The
glosses themselves are Latin versions of these descriptions, identified by R. K. Root
as material from Joseph of Exeter’s *Iliad of Dares Phrygius*, a twelfth-century
versification of the prose account of the Trojan War attributed to Dares Phrygius.
They begin, at V.799, with the portrait of Diomedes, in a gloss that is only in
manuscript Cambridge, St. John’s College MS L.i. (J). I quote here from Root’s
transcription and translation of the Westminster manuscript of Joseph of Exeter, to
give full context, before providing the text of the glosses in the *Troilus* manuscripts:

Voce ferox, animo preceps, feruente cerebro,
Audentique ira, ualidos quadratur in artus
Titides, plenisque meretur tidea factis;
Sic animo, sic ore fero, sic fulminat armis
Fierce of voice, headlong in spirit, in fiery brain, and in daring
wrath, stands squared in mighty limbs Tydides, and in full
deeds is worthy of Tydeus; like him in spirit, like him in fierce
speech, like him he thunders in arms.\(^92\)

The gloss, running parallel to V.799-805, in J reads:

voce ferox animo preceps audentique ira. validos quadratur in
artus tetides plenius que meretur tidea factis sic animo sic ore
fero sic et cetera Calidonius heres.\(^93\)

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\(^92\) Root, “Chaucer’s Dares,” 9. Root transcribes Westminster Abbey, Chapter Library, MS 18,
which provides the basis for his study of Chaucer’s use of Dares.

\(^93\) Benson and Windeatt, “Glosses,” 50. I cite all manuscripts from first-hand inspection;
however there are also monochrome facsimiles of both J and Gg available. See Richard Beadle and
Jeremy Griffiths, eds. *St. John's College, Cambridge, Manuscript L.1: A Facsimile* (Norman, OK:
University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), here at f. 104r; and M.B. Parkes and Richard Beadle, eds.
*Poetical Works of Geoffrey Chaucer: A Facsimile of Cambridge University Library MS Gg.4.27* vol. I
(Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979). I transcribe here from J; where Gg also contains
glosses, I provide those in the footnotes.
The next glosses, concerning Criseyde, are also found only in J up to “insignea amorum” and in both manuscripts thereafter, and begin alongside her portrait at V.806, at the head of the stanza:

In medium librata statum briseis heriles
Promit in aspectum94 uultus nodatur in equos
Flauicies crinita sinus, umbreque minoris
Delicias oculus iunctos suspendit in arcus.
Diuiciis forme certant insignia morum:
Sobria simplicitas, comis pudor, arida numquam
Poscenti pietas, et fandi gracia lenis

Balanced in medium stature, Briseis sets forth to view her lordly features. Her hairy yellowness is knotted into equal folds, and her eye lifts into joined arches the delights of lesser shadow [i.e., the lady’s eyebrows]. With the riches of her form strive the marks of character: sober simplicity, a pleasing modesty, a pity never arid for him who asks, and gentle grace of speech.95

In J, where we find the fuller version of the second gloss alongside V.806-26, its text reads:

In medium librata statum Criseis heriles promit in aspectum
vultus nodatur in equos flauicies crinita // Vmbraque minoris
delicias oculus iunctos suspendit in arcus // diuiciis forme
certant insignia amorum // sobria simplicitas comis pudor
arida numquam | Poscenti pietas gracia fandi lenis.96


95 Root, “Chaucer’s Dares,” 12.

96 The text of the gloss is broken into three shorter extracts, to more closely parallel the stanzas of the poem; I signal these via the double line dividers. Benson and Windeatt, “Glosses,” 50; Cambridge, St. Johns, L.1, 104v; and CUL MS Gg.4.27, f. 114r. As it appears in the manuscripts, this passage is more than a little confusing. Gompf’s text, as well as Root’s study of Chaucer’s use of Joseph, which relies on the extant manuscripts, suggest that these glosses preserve a number of scribal errors. In some of the more egregious instances of transmission error, Gompf and Root’s texts have “morum” where the glosses read “amorum,” while Gg preserves two further errors, reading
The final gloss, found in J and written within the text in Cambridge University Library MS Gg. 4.27 (Gg), covers the conditiones of Troilus, alongside his portrait from V.820-40:

Troilus in spacium surgentes explicat artus  
Mente gigas, etate puer, nullique secundus  
Audendo uirtutis opus: mixtoque uigore  
Gratior illustres insignit gloria uultus

Troilus in bulk extends his rising limbs, in mind a giant, in age a boy, and second to none in daring valor's deed; and with tempered vigor a more pleasing glory marks his splendid features.97

The final Troilus gloss reads:

Troilus in spacium surgentes explicat arcus  // Mente gigas  
etate puer mixtoque vigore  // Nullique secundus virtutis  
opis.98

Formally, they resemble their counterparts in The Canterbury Tales: they are unattributed quotations from Chaucer's source texts, placed in the margins next to the relevant part of the English poem, without further commentary. Extrapolating from the arguments put forth by Brusendorff and Silvia, scholarship on these potentially authorial glosses has interpreted them as memoranda for further textual revision. Benson and Windeatt note that they “may derive from Chaucer’s working


98 Benson and Windeatt, “Glosses,” 51; Cambridge, St. Johns, L1, 104v and Parkes and Beadle, CUL MS Gg.4.27, f. 114r. Gg's text reads: “Troilus in spacium surgentes explicat arcus mente gigas etate puer m(i)xxt(o)que vigore Nulli que secundus audendo virtutus opis'.
papers,” and Ardis Butterfield notes, “It has been argued, on the analogy of the Latin
glosses in copies of The Canterbury Tales, that these sections of Latin are likely to be
part of the earliest stages of the poem’s construction.”99 As with those Canterbury
Tales glosses, however, to understand these quotations as editorial notes, rather
than a form of commentary, is to elide a great deal of the subtlety and complexity in
the way they interact with the text.

2.4 The Challenges of Multi-Dimensional Intertextuality in Troilus and Criseyde

Before, however, setting out to chart the hermeneutics of Chaucer’s
marginalia, the intrepid manuscript explorer must first unearth the tracks of his
intertext’s transmission: there remain certain challenges, sprung from lacunae in
the extant manuscript corpus of Joseph’s iad, to reading into the glosses this
Chaucerian hermeneutic of polysemy to the Joseph of Exeter glosses in J and Gg. The
evidence of extant manuscripts makes it difficult to assess how well-known Joseph’s
Iliad was in the fourteenth century. All five of the extant manuscripts of the
complete poem are dated by Gompf to the thirteenth century, and even the 1541
editio princeps appears, according to his stemma, to be based on one of the extant
manuscripts’ predecessors.100 A further fifteen manuscripts—including Gg and J
and their Latin glosses—contain excerpts of the poem, though only one of these, the
thirteenth-century Leipzig, U.B. Ms. lt. 164, contains excerpts of the three portraits


100 Gompf, Joseph Iscanus, 22-35, 45.
that make up the four glosses.\textsuperscript{101} Gompf hypothesizes a list, drawn largely from records in catalogues, of a further eleven lost manuscripts, some of which are the missing exemplars of those that still survive. Most of these are also from the thirteenth century, though he does mention another two, possibly three, lost manuscripts from the fourteenth century.\textsuperscript{102} Chaucer could, of course, have encountered the poem in a thirteenth-century form—indeed, given the paucity of later copies, this may be quite likely—and it is not impossible that other fourteenth- or fifteenth-century readers of \textit{Troilus} could have done so as well.\textsuperscript{103} The gap in the text’s copying history, however, indicates that there is not a clearly identifiable history of scribes continuing to copy and circulate the poem in the later fourteenth century, a fact that makes it difficult to ascertain the extent to which it might have been known by Chaucer’s audience. It is certainly possible that it may have been

\textsuperscript{101} Gompf, \textit{Joseph Iscanus}, 51-54. He suggests here that the manuscript in which Chaucer knew the poem, which must have been another complete copy of the text, is now lost, and concurs with Root’s assertion that it is quite possible that Chaucer took this to be the “Dares” he refers to in the text, as the author and title were not recorded: “Die Zitate scheint schon Chaucer im verloren Original von 1385 notiert zu haben. Verfasser und Titel sind nicht vermerkt, doch hielt Chaucer für Dares den Autor” (The quotations appear to have been recorded by Chaucer from a now lost original from 1385. The author and title are not marked, but Chaucer considers Dares to be the author).

\textsuperscript{102} Gompf, \textit{Joseph Iscanus}, 55-57. The first of these is mentioned in a letter from the end of the fourteenth century, from Florence: “Am Ende des 14. Jahrhunderts kannte Coluccio Salutati die “Ylias” aber nicht ihren Autor; er schrieb nämlich in einem Brief vom 25.3.1398 (?) aus Florenz...” (At the end of the fourteenth century, Coluccio Salutati knew the “Ylias,” but not its author; because he wrote (about it) in a letter dated 25.3.1398, from Florence...). The second two come from a library catalogue in Peterborough, but do not appear to be clearly identifiable as Joseph of Exeter’s \textit{Iliad}: “Wie schon erwähnt, sind in den alten Bibliotheks-Katalogen von ... Canterbury (um 1300) und Peterborough (14. Jahrhundert) je eine Trojadichtung aufgeführt, die vielleicht mit der ‘Ylias’ identisch sind” (As already mentioned, in the library catalogues of Canterbury (ca. 1300) and Peterborough (fourteenth century) are listed a Trojan poem, which might be identical with the ‘Ylias’).

\textsuperscript{103} Gompf himself is quite clear in attributing Chaucer’s citations from the poem to a now-lost manuscript.
known to at least the smaller, more intimate audience of Chaucer’s literary contemporaries; the poet himself had read it, after all. It is more difficult to claim that someone encountering either fifteenth-century glossed *Troilus* manuscript would have been able to read the at times difficult Latin of Joseph’s poem, known it well enough to recognize it as the source of the marginalia, recall the larger narrative context of the quotations, and then apply its ethical context to Chaucer’s poem.¹⁰⁴

It is noteworthy, however, that although the complete text of Joseph’s poem survives in few manuscripts, of those extant texts, a significant number demonstrate English provenance and readership, and many more extracts may have circulated in florilegia and school texts.¹⁰⁵ Joseph’s poem likely enjoyed a wider reading audience

¹⁰⁴ Rigg, in his verse translation of the poem, describes its prose as “one of most literary Latin epics of the Middle Ages, surpassing even Walter of Chatillon’s Alexendreis (a curriculum text) in its dense poetic style.” Rigg, *Iliad*, iv. Walter Bradbury Sedgwick classifies Joseph’s style and meter as that of a Silver Age Latin poet, and observes, of the complexity of his verse, that “One would have thought that the ever-increasing ingenuity in the use of every conceivable rhetorical device and contortion of speech, from Virgil onwards, had reached its culmination in Statius and Persius; but a study of Joseph will show that there were still further possibilities.” Walter Bradbury Sedgwick, “The *Bellum Trojanum* of Joseph of Exeter.” *Speculum* 5 (1930): 49-76, at 53. See also Geoffrey B. Riddehough, “Joseph of Exeter: A Forgotten Poet,” *JEGP* 46 (1947): 254-59, who concurs.

¹⁰⁵ Of the five extant manuscripts, three are currently held in English libraries: London, Westminster Abbey MS 18; Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Digby 157; and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 406. The London and Cambridge manuscripts (hereafter, L and C, respectively) are both copied in hands that Gompf tentatively associates with northern France (Gompf 22-29). L bears the *ex libris* of William Camden’s library, locating it to London at least by the first quarter of the seventeenth century, if not earlier; C was donated to the college by Mathew Parker in 1575. Their history prior to donation is more difficult to trace, but they may well have circulated in England. This possibility is particularly intriguing in the case of C: Gompf’s stemma assigns a shared, now-lost exemplar to manuscripts C and O, the Oxford copy of Joseph’s text. Unlike its current compatriots, O is not generally considered to have been copied on the Continent. Rather, Gompf notes that O contains a signature, “G.Z.” which N. R. Ker attributes to the Benedictine abbey of St. Martin of Battle, in Sussex (Gompf 23); A. K. Bate takes this attribution one step further, and opines that the manuscript was likely copied in Battle. See A. K. Bate, *Introduction to Joseph of Exeter, Trojan War I-III* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips 1986), 11. O appears, moreover, to have enjoyed an audience roughly contemporary with that of the J and Gg *Troilus* manuscripts: folio 100v contains fifteenth-
than is suggested by the number of extant manuscripts, one which was active in England and, at the least in the case of O, reached into the fifteenth century, demonstrating a readership that at the very least was contemporaneous with that of J and Gg. We should not assume that the paucity of surviving manuscripts indicates its lack of readership. Joseph’s poem—which often circulated attributed to Dares—participated in a broad tradition of medieval English literature on the destruction of Troy which were widely circulated among an educated readership, and formed a fundamental part of the foundational myths of Britain.\(^\text{106}\) Not every reader of *Troilus and Criseyde* would have known Joseph’s poem, or even necessarily have been able to read the Latin in the margins, nor would every reader need to in order to appreciate the English poem, or even to recognize resonances with other Latin accounts of the fall of Troy; there is no reason to assume that Chaucer, or the scribes

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who copied the glosses, expected their full intertextual potential to be accessible to every reader of the poem. Yet, it is plausible—particularly among the educated, literary immediate coterie audience hypothesized for Chaucer’s poetry—that a reader encountering the Latin quotations would have a frame of reference that could include not only Dares and Dictys, but also their treatment in Joseph of Exeter, within which to decide how to interpret *Troilus* and its glosses. Moreover, Joseph’s text, as a product of its clerical origins and likely circulation in the medieval school room, likely carried with it, for those readers who recognized the glosses’ source in Joseph’s poem itself, generic expectations already associating it with a moralizing, and potentially-antifeminist treatment of the Troy narratives, and playing directly into a more ambiguous, potentially darkly moralizing reading of the Chaucer’s poem.107

2.5 Multidimensional Reading as Commentary

Joseph of Exeter’s poem itself is a dramatically expanded hexameter epic chronicling, up to line 886 of Book VI, the Trojan War according to the prose summary of the conflict referred to as the *Historia de excidio Troiae*. This account was attributed to Dares Phrygius and purportedly translated into Latin by Cornelius Nepos, formed the basis of both Benoit de Saint Maure’s and Guido della Colonne’s accounts of the poem, and was likewise one of Boccaccio’s sources for the *Filostrato*. The final few hundred lines of the poem, which chronicle the Greeks’ return from Troy and the hostile reception that most of them received upon arriving home, are based upon a second (purportedly eye-witness) source: Dictys Cretensis’ *Ephemeris belli Troiani*. Joseph’s sources are, as Rigg puts it, “bare and arid, with no colour or drama—just the facts,” leaving him a great deal of room to embellish the story. Joseph’s account of the fall of Troy dramatically expands this narrative into a deeply polemical text, reflecting a great deal of stylistic influence not only from the Silver Age poets’ versification, as W. B. Sedgwick notes, and particularly distinct traces of Juvenalian satire.

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In Joseph’s text, these satirical impulses are directed largely at a vituperative condemnation of human *cupiditas* and earthly love, through the particular lens of his scathing treatment of Paris and Helen—and, at the outset, of Venus herself, beginning with his account of the *lis dearum*. Joseph’s Venus is not merely the Goddess of Love, but a woman whose sexuality, and specifically, femininity, transcend the bounds of what is acceptable: “*prodiga sexus, / Femina plus, quam iura sinant, et mollior equo*” (wasteful with femininity, more woman than law permits, and softer than is right).¹¹¹ Juno’s critique of Venus, as she attempts to persuade Paris to select her as the winner in the goddesses’ contest, plays deliberately on the ambiguity of the word *cupiditas*, so that Venus is not only lustful—even excessively so—but also greedy. Venus is said to be golden, Juno claims, because she “petit aurea donum.”¹¹² Minerva, the second speaker in the *lis

¹¹¹ Gompf, *Joseph Iscanus*, II.275-77. Post-Joseph of Exeter treatments of Venus deal with her association with *luxuria* in differing ways—Alan of Lille finds her problematic in another way entirely: she works against Nature, but she does so by promoting homosexual behavior—out, apparently, of a love of novelty, as she is bored with always doing the same thing—whereas Joseph’s Venus is unnatural by virtue of an excess of femininity, “*femina plus*’ than is right. Alan of Lille, The Complaint of Nature, trans. James J. Sheridan (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1980). The *Roman de la Rose*, begun only a few decades after Joseph’s *Iliad*, associates her, not surprisingly, with the Lover’s cause; she is the one who, nearing the climax of the poem, destroys the castle in which Bel Accueil was imprisoned, setting the way for the Lover to finally pluck the Rose Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Le Roman de la Rose* vols. II-V, edited by Ernest Langlois, Société des Anciens Textes Français (Paris, 1920-24). By Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*, Venus seems to have been somewhat rehabilitated, and, along with Genius, who is now her priest, rather than Nature’s, endorses a more natural—or at the least, more heterosexual—sexuality. John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, in *The Works of John Gower* vols. 2 and 3, edited by G. C. Macauley (Oxford: Clarendon, 1901). In Chaucer’s *Parliament of Foules*, the two are similarly associated, as the dreamer is obliged to pass through Venus’ temple on his way to the witnessing Nature’s matchmaking amongst the birds. Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Parliament of Foules*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, edited by Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), 383-94. All of this makes for a complicated, though not at all homogenously condemnatory, context which a reader encountering Joseph in the margins of Chaucer’s poetry might think of.

dearum, makes still more explicit precisely what the consequences of devotion to
Venus, and cupiditas, are. Venus is deceitful, and her favors turn to ruin:

Quam fallax et bland a venit! Nil hoste polito
Sevius. Omnifico vultu mentita favorem
Amplexum in planctus solvit, defederat urbes,
Arces frangit et in subitum rapit omnia Martem.¹¹³

How deceitful and flattering she comes! Nothing is more cruel
than a polite enemy. Having feigned her favor with a deceitful
face, she turns her embrace into weeping, she makes cities
break treaties, she destroys strongholds, and draws everything
into sudden war.

In her own rebuttal, the final of the three goddesses’ speeches, Venus makes no
attempt to deny Juno and Minerva’s accusations against her: instead, she puts them
into practice. She spins the faults she is accused of as virtues—she may give her
love freely, but she has given it to Anchises and to Troy; the destruction she has
caus ed is her gift to the gods and to men. Her smooth-tongued speech moves Paris
to award her the prize in exchange for Helen, so that Minerva’s prediction shall be
fulfilled.

In this respect, Helen is the earthly equivalent of Venus: cupidinous beyond
acceptability, but in an equally equivocal way, such that her lust is inextricably tied
with greed, and her seduction away from Sparta is simultaneously dependent upon
both. Joseph’s handling of the Raptus Helenae is an explicit condemnation of the
vices touched upon in the lis dearum, treated not as a forcible abduction, but an
immediate, mutual decision to engage in adultery. The two meet, in Book III, on the

¹¹³ Gompf, Joseph Iscanus, II.434-37.
shores of Helea, and are instantly attracted to one another—as they are in Joseph’s source, the prose Dares. From this immediate attraction, however, Joseph expands the *raptus* into several hundred lines detailing their meeting, Helen’s departure from Greece, their first sexual encounter, and the doubly sinful nature of their motives, before concluding, explicitly, that Helen’s departure was entirely voluntary and she, "Numquam rapta."\(^{114}\)

Joseph equates their mutual attraction immediately with both physical and financial desire, counseling Paris not to be too hasty in his conquest: "Inclite predo, / Ne propera! Dabit illa manus, manus aurea vincet" (Illustrious ravisher, do not hurry! She will offer her hand, gold will conquer her hand).\(^{115}\) Though Helen is drawn to Paris, physically—the poet is quite clear that she is equally attracted, if slightly more circumspect in showing it—it is his gold that will win her over, and the final lure that persuades Helen to join Paris on his ship is not the promise of love, but of wealth, the "explicitas peregrini Tindaris auri / Blandicias ... complutaque murice vela" (clearly displayed enticements of foreign gold from Tindari and the ship with purple sail).\(^{116}\) Joseph’s double condemnation of the pair, for *cupiditas* of the flesh, and *cupiditas* for wealth, is repeated less than a hundred lines later, when Paris soothes Helen’s fearful second thoughts, and brings her to bed. He is

\(^{114}\) Gompf, *Joseph Iscanus*, III.293.


characterized as a seducer, a smooth-talker, but the subject of his speech is wealth, not love:

\[ ... ebur aggregat Indum, 
Thura Sabea, Mide fluvios et vellera Serum. 
Ac mundi maioris opes, quodque educat aer 
locundum pontus clarum vel fertile tellus, 
Hec faciles emere thoros, domuere rebelles 
Amplexus, pepigere fidem. \ldots \]^{117}

...collects Indian ivory, Sabean frankincense, floods of gold and Seric fleeces. And the wealth of the greater world, whatever bright, pleasing thing the air, or the sea, or the fertile land might produce, these things bought an easy bed, mastered her rebellious embraces, and fixed her loyalty.

Helen’s love is not given, but purchased, with the promise of a standard assortment of the luxuries enjoyed by the wealthy ladies of medieval romance. This strategy works, and Helen immediately grants Paris first one kiss, and then many more, and the two engage in a first sexual liaison, which Joseph characterizes explicitly as shameful and guilty, castigating Helen for not merely her adultery, but the financial gain that swayed her acquiescence, in her eagerness to wait upon a purchaser.\^{118}

Joseph’s polemical treatment of the matter of Helen’s departure from Troy, and her affair with Paris, takes on further significance in light of the first few lines of the poem, in which he dedicates the work to Baldwin, former Archbishop of Canterbury. He contrasts his patron’s apparent humility—Baldwin was sought out

\footnote{117}{Gompf, *Joseph Iscanus*, III.324-29.}

\footnote{118}{The Latin here reads, “Proh scelus! An tantis potuisti, pessima, votis / Indulsisse moras exspectatbatque voluptas / Emptorem?” [Shame, for that sin! Could you have granted delays for such promises? Did pleasure await a buyer?] Gompf, *Joseph Iscanus*, III.334-36.}

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for office by Henry II, rather than seeking it himself— with the ambition of his predecessor, Richard, admonishing his audience:

Felices, quos non trahit ambitus! Ardua nactus
Non in se descendit honos; non ceca potestas,
Quid possit Fortuna, videt; non perfida sentit
Prosperitas flevisse humilem, qui ridet in altis.
Parcite sacrilega superos incessere preda,
Parcite! Venales quisquis venatur honores,
Unde ruat, tabulata struit. Premit ultio noxas
Tunc gravior, cum tarda venit; tunc plena timoris,
Cum terrore caret; blanda nil sevius ira,
Cum floret miser felix iniuria voti.\(^{119}\)

Happy are they whom ambition does not entice! Honor won for itself does not descend from the heights; no blind power sees what Fortune is able to; no faithless prosperity perceives the humble weep, who laughs in the heights. Refrain from abusing the gods with impious plundering! Refrain! Whoever seeks honors for sale, constructs a platform from which he may fall. Vengeance inflicts more painful injuries when it comes late; then is it full of fear, when it seems without terror; when the injury of wretched desire flourishes happily, nothing is more savage than longsuffering wrath.

If these first lines are understood to be a prologue in the medieval sense as a statement of the value of the text, here we find the clearest equivalent of Joseph's expression of the *causa finalis* or *utilitas* of his work. He instructs readers to check ambition and arrogance, or else risk a precipitous fall. The venomous, overt polemic of his treatment of Venus, Helen, and Paris is thus deeply significant, both motivating the progression of the epic and in turn tying it back to Joseph's prologue,

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The narrative of the Trojan War, then, becomes an object lesson in the consequences of such ambition, Paris, the man who hunts for honors for sale, and the sinful affair of Paris and Helen, the underlying focus of the poem: all become underlying leitmotifs against which the heroism of characters like Hector and Troilus is contrasted.

When read against this background, *Troilus and Criseyde* takes on a new, and a darker, slant. Though the two lovers' affair is not adulterous, it is still not only a carnal affair, but also potentially an illicit one, at some odds with the legal parameters of marriage. Joseph’s stance on the topic is rather clearly disapproving, and when held in comparison with *Troilus and Criseyde*, it reflects the

120 Dunkel, “Satirical Themes,” sets out in some detail the pervasive influence of Juvenalian satire in these particular passages, leading him, similarly, to conclude that the poem is not an epic, but a satire masquerading as epic. Though I hesitate to draw such distinct generic boundaries, it seems evident that the satiric mode is present in the poem as the underpinning that gives the epic what Joseph’s prologue identifies as the text’s value.

121 For perhaps the clearest example of this, see Gompt, *Joseph Icanus*, V.336-42, where Paris and Menelaus meet in battle. Paris, who is—perhaps reflecting the influence of Ovid’s *Heroides*—more suited for the bedroom than for battle, is obliged to be rescued by his more famous, and more skilled, brother, and Joseph observes, "Cithereius heros / Obicit ereptumque hosti Troiamque reductum / Restituit thalamis et bellis mollibus aptat. / Macte Paris, sic terga paras, sic prelia linquis / Atque hostes, ignave, tuos? At Martius Hector / Fraternas acies et bella vicaria tractans" (The Cytherian hero cast himself before the enemy, restored him, rescued and returned to the bedroom and prepared him for more gentle wars. Brave Paris, do you thus obtain your retreat, do you thus, cowardly, abandon battle and your enemies, while martial Hector manages fraternal troops and vicarious wars?). His praise for Hector is not solely because he is a skilled and courageous warrior, but because he demonstrates this skill and courage in the course of fighting—and leading—Paris’ war.

122 For a more detailed analysis of this relationship, see Henry Ansgar Kelly, *Love and Marriage in the Age of Chaucer* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975). In particular, Kelly discusses the possibility of reading *Troilus* as the story of a clandestine marriage. Such a marriage would be recognized by ancient law, and considered valid, though punishable by penance for its secrecy under medieval canon law. Kelly argues that *Troilus* demonstrates intent to marry Criseyde, since he invokes the god of marriage, Hymeneus, which would create a matrimonial union under canon law; but Chaucer leaves the legal status of their union ambiguous.
poem with a condemnation of the love affair that makes up its story. The addition of quotations from this particular source text, and no other, in the margins of Chaucer's poem, sets the two texts against one another in a manner that invites comparison. Readers might re-evaluate the poem through their general knowledge of the story of the Trojan War, and—for those who recognize the quotations, associate them correctly with the poem from which they are taken, and remember its extensive polemical embellishments on its sources—their knowledge of Joseph's text as well.

In particular, the juxtaposition of Chaucer's narrative with Joseph's invites juxtaposition and comparison of the two texts' central love affairs—both doomed, tragic affairs placed within the larger setting of the Trojan War—and allows the reader to draw parallels between the two couples that fill out the narrative of *Troilus* in multiple ways. Robert P. apRoberts observes that a great deal of the sensuality with which Boccaccio imbues both his Creseida and her romance with Troilo is sublimated in Chaucer's poem. While the third book of the poem clearly culminates in the two spending the night together in bed, Chaucer's language is delicate enough to leave the exact nature of the manner in which they pass their time together to the imagination of his audience. A well-read medieval reader, however, could restore some of this sensuality to the text to *Troilus* via Joseph's text. Where Chaucer is coy to the point of uncertainty with Troilus and Criseyde's first night together, Joseph's is bluntly explicit. Chaucer observes, merely, that "Of hire delit or joies oon the leest / Were impossible to my wit to seye" (III, 1310-13)

encouraging those who have experience in the matter to judge for themselves what would have transpired between the two lovers that night. And, though the poet goes on to elaborate on their occupation for close to another hundred lines—namely, kissing and talking—the closest he appears to come to an admission of intimacy between the two is the choice of lyric genre in the passage that concludes the tryst, an *aubade* in which Troilus mourns the arrival of dawn, and the two lovers’ separation after their night together, as is typical of the genre.

Joseph’s depiction of the first time Paris and Helen sleep together, in contrast, leaves little to the imagination. Paris calms his upset paramour and quickly persuades her not merely to kiss him—the most physical interaction that Chaucer will own up to for Troilus and Criseyde—but rather to almost immediately to succumb to his advances:

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sed pectore toto
Incumbens gremium solvit, premit ore, latentem
Furatur veneram, iamque exspirante Dyone
Conscia secretos testatur purpura rores.124
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But with her whole heart, leaning forward she opens her loins, presses her mouth, plunders his hidden love and now with sighing passion, a knowing color bears witness to her secret dews.

Joseph’s description of the scene—particularly with the use of “gremium,” a term that leaves little room for ambiguity—is nothing if not direct. Taken together, his treatment of Paris and Helen could allow the reader of Chaucer’s text to fill in the gaps in the English text and return to the poem some of the sensuality that the poet

has suppressed from the narrative: to read the two poems against one another creates the possibility of re-imagining the love scene in this light, offering the Chaucerian audience the option to do so, should they so choose.

To the post-Chaucerian reader of the poet’s texts—as one first encountering Troilus in these fifteenth-century manuscripts would be—this reinstated sensuality illuminates the tenuous threads of transition between the poet of Troilus’ double sorrow and the poet of The Canterbury Tales that “sownen into synne” (CT X.1085). Inasmuch as the Tales illustrate Chaucer’s encyclopedic literary abilities, pairing romance and ribaldry, fable and fart joke, saint’s life, sermon, and scatology, this show of generic and stylistic breadth lies latent in Troilus as well. Resituating Troilus alongside Joseph’s poem, the glosses remind readers that, even if the author does not overtly explore human sexuality in the poem, it—and female sexuality in particular—is still deeply implicated in the genesis of Troilus itself, and a professional poetic interest that spans more than the production of Chaucer’s last major work.

To remind readers of Troilus’ inherent investment in this sensuality is in a sense to bring the poet of the earlier romance, who exhorts young lovers to turn their thoughts away from earthly love, and think on God (V.1835-48) into closer orbit with the Chaucer who contemplates little else in the finely-honed explorations of earthly love in the Tales fabliaux.

Yet readers might choose to take this comparison still further, extending the dual significance of Helen and Paris’ cupidity to Troilus and to Criseyde, and lending a great deal more ambiguity to the nature of the Chaucerian text’s network of personal relationships. Criseyde’s consideration of both her suitors’ estate is, in the
context of *Troilus and Criseyde* alone, perfectly innocent; in light of the extent to which Helen is seduced away to Troy by Paris’ riches, and the criticism they both receive for it, Criseyde’s decision to love Troilus, and then Diomede, might appear more mercenary. Indeed, this deeper stratum of ambiguous meaning is particularly à propos in the latter case, for the exchange follows directly upon the passages incorporating the characters’ portraits from Book IV of Joseph of Exeter—and thus, in Gg and J, the Latin marginalia as well—and culminates in the scene of Criseyde’s betrayal of Troilus. Diomede comes to speak with Criseyde at her father’s tent, and like flattering Venus, seducing Paris, he speaks so well for himself that

> alle hire sikes soore adown he leyde;  
> And finaly, the sooth for to seyne,  
> He refte hire of the grete of al hire peyne” (V, 1034-36).

The end result is Criseyde granting Diomede her affection made tangible in the form of a horse, a brooch, and a sleeve. The brooch, in particular, a luxury of which Diomede has “litel need,” becomes a metonym for Criseyde’s betrayal and the relationship itself (V, 1038-41 and V, 1650-70). Cast in these ambiguously mercantile terms, Criseyde is, solely within the context of Chaucer’s poem, behaving as one might expect any romance heroine to behave, down to the granting of her sleeve to her lover. A medieval reader could, however, read deeper, seeing a Helen-like *cupiditas* for wealth in Criseyde’s decisions—one which may be mutual, in Diomede’s case at least—that broadly paints her betrayal as a betrayal of sexual fidelity and a marked concern with material ambition, and calls into question the validity of the love story that makes up the meat of the poem’s narrative. One could read the story literally, accepting at face value Chaucer’s assertions of the depth of...
Criseyde’s feeling. Or one might choose to read a deeper, satirical cynicism in Chaucer’s text that calls into question the true nature of the lovers’ bond.

Such an equivocal reading, moreover, adds a difficult slant to the narratorial interlude in Book III, during Troilus and Criseyde’s first night together, when Chaucer defends his lovers—and love itself—against their detractors. He who is opposed to love is, the poet claims, “a coveytous or a wrecche / ... / That of tho pens that he kan mokre and kecche,” (III, 1373-75) a miserly figure who scorns love because he has never experienced it. The two—covetousness and love—are, in fact, mutually exclusive: “So perfit joie may no nygard have” (III, 1379). Here, Chaucer turns to classical precedent to rebut any such critics: the covetous will lose their luxury—here, wine—and live miserably, while every lover will prosper. If any should doubt this pronouncement, they have only to consider two exempla: covetous Midas’ long ears, and the “drink” that Crassus was given for his “affectis wronge” serve as signs to “techen hem [love’s detractors] that they ben in the vice, / And loveres nought” (III, 1380-93). The passage—minus the addition of Midas and Crassus—is already present in Boccaccio’s Filostrato, and Chaucer’s somewhat embellished version functions perfectly well within the context of the English poem,

125According to apocryphal legend, the Roman general Crassus, who is considered a stock figure of avarice, had molten gold poured into his mouth after his death, as punishment for his greed. John Livingston Lowes, “Chaucer and Dante,” Modern Philology 14 (1917): 705-35, suggests that Chaucer’s source for this—in particular, for the combination of both figures as an exemplum against avarice, a detail not included in the censure of avarice found in Boccaccio’s Filostrato, his chief source here—is Dante’s Purgatorio Canto XX. 103-8 and 116-17. Both Windeatt’s and Stephen Barney’s editorial notes accept this attribution. Barry Windeatt, ed., Troilus and Criseyde (London, 2003), 415, and Stephen Barney, ed., Troilus and Criseyde, in The Riverside Chaucer, edited by Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), 1042.
offering up a defense of the author's *materia* at a point of crucial importance when the reader opposed to love might be particularly likely object to its *moralitas*.

The medieval reader would be well within his or her rights to read the passage thus and leave it at that, but a reader with some familiarity with Joseph of Exeter might find that significant complications arise in interpreting the speech. At one level of reading, the author appears to insist that love and greed are exclusive, and at a deeper level, he has drawn much of the material of his account of the Trojan War from a poem that insists that not only are they not incompatible, but that they are, in fact, vices deeply implicated in one another. Within this deeper context, is Chaucer defending his subjects, or raising a subtle critique of the matter of his story, slyly undermining the defense he appears to be constructing? A medieval reader armed with the familiarity with Joseph of Exeter's poem might interpret the passage either way. The presence of the glosses from Joseph's Iliad do not assert the primacy of a particular, ethical reading of the text, but they make this somewhat textually subversive though orthodoxy moral reading possible.

Chaucer concludes *Troilus* with a direct address to his book, in which he makes a rare overt critical statement about his work. He christens the text "litel myn tragedye,"\(^{126}\) nomenclature that defines its genre and, in medieval rhetorical terms, at least, its intention: tragedy was the *ars laudandi*, a genre concerned with praise, written in an elevated style, whose narrative (roughly put) begins happily and descends into unhappiness. This seems an apt designation for *Troilus*; its

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\(^{126}\) Chaucer, *Troilus*, V.1786.
composition in rime royal stanzas and extensive passages of elevated rhetoric that
reach their pinnacle in the poem’s lyric moments indicate its elevated style, while its
plot follows the expected necessary downturn from good fortune—indeed, in this
sense the “double sorwe” of Troilus\textsuperscript{127} is a sort of double tragedy, as he falls from
happy immunity to love to despair, and from the happiness of requited love with
Criseyde to her eventual betrayal and to his own death. The reader who chooses to
read Troilus and Criseyde’s love affair in the context of its Latin source, however,
might find himself questioning this generic definition. Joseph’s Troilus is
particularly heroic when understood in opposition with his lustful brother; if
himself the perpetrator of a similar immorality via his affair with Criseyde, he is less
easily identified as a hero—whether the tortured lover of a tragic romance or the
legendary Trojan warrior—deserving of praise. The presence of the glosses from
Joseph’s Iliad do not assert the primacy of this particular, ethical reading of the text,
nor explicitly contradict Chaucer’s labeling his poem a “tragedye,” but they make
this somewhat textually subversive but orthodox moral reading possible.

In this respect, the glosses in Troilus and Criseyde resemble those in The
Canterbury Tales where, for example, glosses in the ”Wife of Bath’s Prologue”
present readers with brief quotations of scripture that, in early manuscripts like
Ellesmere, are filtered through Jerome’s Against Jovinian where they take on
polemical significance often at odds with their original import in the Bible. Those in
Troilus and Criseyde offer up a potential reminder of a varying larger context in

\textsuperscript{127} Chaucer, Troilus, l.1.
which readers might interpret the poem, dependent upon not only their Latin literacy, but also their knowledge of the narrative tradition of the Trojan War. A reader who was familiar with Joseph of Exeter might recall his treatment of Paris and Helen's love affair, and adjust his interpretation of Troilus and Criseyde accordingly. He might also, however, recall the bare-bones version of the war in the prose Dares, in which Troilus is valorous and kills many Greeks, and the poem’s martial exploits are not shackled to the scathing condemnation of Paris and Helen’s immoral liaison and then, by the transitive property of polemical allegory, to the atrocious ambition of Baldwin’s predecessor, Richard. In other words, they allow for the possibility of different levels or reading, dependent at once upon a reader’s linguistic and literary knowledge and upon the version of “Dares” that he chooses to associate with the English verse. This choice is made possible by the quotations’ lack of attribution, and the sort of semi-permeable nature of Trojan War narrative, in which a given referent—Troilus, Diomed, Achilles, and so on—has a multiplicity of more-or-less analogous possible antecedents.

2.6 Chaucerian Glossing and the Limits of Intertextual Stability

A second challenge arises in comparing the Troilus glosses to those in The Canterbury Tales, where one cannot help but be struck by the differences in the two apparatuses’ mise-en-page. The glosses in The Canterbury Tales are not distributed in anything resembling an even fashion throughout the text of the poem—they are, for example, significantly more concentrated in tales like “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue,” “The Man of Law’s Tale,” “The Franklin’s Tale” and so on—but the Latin
quotations can be found in multiple parts of the poem, from the brief excerpts from Boethius’ *Consolation of Philosophy* in the “Knight’s Tale” to the citations of multiple sources of Latin *auctoritas* in the margins of the “Wife of Bath’s Prologue.” The *Troilus* glosses from Joseph of Exeter, however, are concentrated in a single portion of the Book V. They can still enable the sort of intertextual polysemous reading of the text outlined above, but they do so in a subtle, more gradual fashion, unfolding over successive re-readings of the manuscript, as medieval readers’ encounters with the first four books are reshaped by the recontextualization of the final book within its classical heritage. Where *The Canterbury Tales* glosses accompany the poem at the precise point where they complicate the text’s interpretation, the vast majority of narrative points where Joseph of Exeter’s *Iliad* renders the English verse problematic are separated by many folios from the marginalia; indeed, of these hermeneutically susceptible moments, only Diomede’s seduction of Criseyde, which begins immediately after the three descriptions, is in close proximity to the Latin.

This is likely in part because, if one can extrapolate a particular *modus operandi* from *The Canterbury Tales* glosses, Chaucer displays an overwhelming tendency, in these critical points of interpretive ambiguity, to be working from and alongside his own very close English translation of his Latin *auctoritas*, the glosses, then, accompany their vernacular equivalents in the main text. This is certainly true of the *Troilus* glosses: the Middle English descriptions are—with the exception of

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128 For a good overview of the corpus of *Canterbury Tales* glosses’ distribution, see Partridge, *Glosses.*
what appears to be some confusion on Chaucer's part regarding the desirability of Criseyde's joined eyebrows—extremely close translations of their Latin ancestors.129 *Troilus and Criseyde's* debt to Joseph of Exeter is undeniable, but it is equally diffuse: Joseph records nothing of a romance involving Troilus, and his Criseyde, present only in the portraits that become the J and Gg glosses, is the Greek Briseis, who has no more in common with the Trojan heroine than the similarities in their names.130 Chaucer's main source for the romance between Troilus and Criseyde is, rather, the Troilo and Creseida of Boccaccio's *Filostrato*, and his debt to Boccaccio considerably closer.131 This leaves few opportunities for Chaucer to bring Joseph into his margins, however relevant direct quotation from scenes beyond the portraits in Book IV might be at certain points in the narrative.132


131 See, for example, the side-by-side comparison between the two published for the New Chaucer Society in *Chaucer's Troylus and Crysyde from the Harley MS. 3943 Compared with Boccaccio's Filostrato* Chaucer Society Publications Series 1 vol. 44 (London: N. Trübner and Co., 1873). Chaucer, however, never names Boccaccio as one of his sources, though he cites his classical auctores, including Dares, with relative frequency.

132 In addition to those scenes outlined above, which invite comparison with the *raptus Helenae* and Paris' return to Troy, see, for example: Calchas' departure from the city, with his
Even some expansion of the portraits in Book V of *Troilus and Criseyde* could give Chaucer the opportunity for further direct quotation of Joseph’s *Iliad*. The portraits in Book IV of the Latin text include a number of portraits of characters who figure into the English text as well. Their treatment in the Latin verse, at times, incorporates Joseph’s censure of those characters whom he finds problematic, for one reason or another, in ways that invite reinterpretation of their context in *Troilus*. Joseph’s portrait of Antenor, a scant three lines of Latin verse, looks winkingly ahead to his eventual betrayal of the city to the Greeks; he is light, and quick, but not always to the Trojan’s advantage:

\[
\text{Anthenor tenui productus corpore, sura}
\]
\[
\text{Succincta, motu facili, quo nemo suorum}
\]
\[
\text{Insidias vel nosse prior vel nectere maior.} \quad 133
\]

The inclusion of Antenor’s portrait could have more immediately called to mind the irony underlying Criseyde’s departure from Troy—the point in the story at which Chaucer interrupts the narrative to include the portraits from Joseph’s *Iliad*—the

appearances in Joseph’s text (particularly if, as Rigg argues, Joseph is the one to make Calchas a Trojan, rather than Greek; see A.G. Rigg, “Calchas, Renegade and Traitor: Dares and Joseph of Exeter,” *Notes and Queries* 45.2 (1998): 176-78); Troilus’ prayer to the classical gods, beginning with Venus, at III.712, and Joseph’s *lis dearum*; Helen’s appearance at the dinner at Deiphebus’ house in Book II.1461-91; the Greek emissaries and the exchange of Antenor for Criseyde, with Joseph’s account of Antenor and Aeneas’ eventual betrayal of the city to the Greeks; and the two points at I.146 and V.1771, in which Chaucer directly invokes comparison with his *auctores*, including Dares. Helen’s presence at the dinner at Deiphebus’ house is particularly interesting, as there is some critical speculation that Chaucer had in mind, during this scene, Virgil’s Deiphobus, who married Helen after Paris’ death. See, for example, Rosanne Gasse, “Deiphebus, Hector, and Troilus in Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde,*” *Chaucer Review* 32.4 (1998): 423-39 and, in particular, McKay Sundwall, “Deiphobus and Helen: A Tantalizing Hint,” *Modern Philology* 73 (1975): 151-56, who argues that not only was Chaucer aware of this context, but that it is implicit in the scene, and used to add an ironic dimension to Troilus and Criseyde’s affair, just as the glosses in J and Gg could potentially do.

133 Gompf, *Joseph IScanus*, IV.76-78.
grim knowledge that the Trojans have traded her to the Greek camp for the man who will eventually open the city’s gates to their enemies.

Joseph moves Helen’s portrait, A. G. Rigg observes, from its traditional place in the prose Dares, towards the beginning of the descriptions of the Trojan leaders, to a place of prominence as the last portrait to be given.\textsuperscript{134} It is significantly expanded from a single sentence in the prose Dares to thirty-five not precisely flattering lines in Joseph’s \textit{Iliad}; Helen in beautiful, yes, but her lustful nature proves an insurmountable flaw:

\begin{quote}
\textit{At teneri titillat mollius equo} \\
\textit{Pruritus iecoris meriteque insignia fame} \\
\textit{Mergens nativi titulos incestat amoris.} \\
\textit{Hoc monstrum non ales edax, non labile saxum,} \\
\textit{Non axis torquens, non mendax vicerit unda;} \\
\textit{Cum bene fracta tepet moriturque sepulta libido,} \\
\textit{Respirant plenis incendia pristina fibris.} \\
\textit{Sic Helenen totam pars unica mergit et ipsum Excitat in cladem regnis certantibus orbem.}\textsuperscript{135}
\end{quote}

But the itching of her tender liver titillates her more than is just and, overwhelming the emblems of her deserved reputation, defiles the honor of her innate affection. No monster, nor greedy bird, nor sliding stone, nor whirling axis, nor lying wave could have overcome it; when lust is well broken, and dies and is buried, the original [lust] warms, the old fires breathe into the full lobes. Thus one part overwhels all of Helen, and incites the world itself to ruin in the combat of kingdoms.

Here Helen is, like Venus the “femina plus, quam iura sinant,” more lustful than is merited, a monstrous flaw that outstrips the torments of Sisyphus, Ixion, Tantalus,

\footnote{\textsuperscript{134} Rigg, \textit{Iliad}, vii.}

\footnote{\textsuperscript{135} Gompf, \textit{Joseph Iscanus}, IV.199-207.}

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and Tityus, whose vultures are “edax”: devouring, but also greedy, hearkening back to Joseph’s vitriolic reproach of Helen’s cupiditas in the previous book. Its consequences, likewise, are clear, and parallel those outlined in the raptus Helenae: the spark of liver itch, once ignited, draws the world itself to disaster, ruin—“cladem”—and kingdoms at war. Her portrait, like the allusion to Antenor’s treachery in his description, encapsulates those parts of Joseph’s polemic that form the foundation of the polysemous intertextuality between Chaucer and his Latin source—but this is an opportunity of which Chaucer does not appear to take advantage.

Why, then, if these glosses are the product of a similar authorial impulse as that responsible for the Tales marginalia, are they found only in one short passage of Book V? At least part of the answer may spring from the nature of the passage itself, which stands apart from much of the rest of the poem. The glosses from Joseph of Exeter are found alongside the series of brief portraits of Diomede,

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137 It is worth noting that certain tales in The Canterbury Tales are treated similarly. In some early manuscripts—though interestingly, not Ellesmere—the “Prioress’ Tale,” for example, has a single long marginal source quotation from John of Garland’s version of the story of Hugh of Lincoln, in which the child appears to rise again from the grave. See Kerby-Fulton, Hilmo, and Olson, Opening Up Middle English Manuscripts, 221-222. Still, given the extent to which this intertextual ambiguity appears to permeate Troilus, in a fashion ostensibly more in keeping with Tales like the “Wife of Bath’s Prologue” or the “Parson’s Tale,” we must attempt to account for the differences in mise-en-page.
Criseyde, and Troilus in Book V, just before Criseyde finally succumbs to Diomede's advances. Their presence is curious; they are not the first set of character portraits in the poem, and they offer further details that potentially contradict the portraits found earlier in the poem.\textsuperscript{138} It seems, moreover, counter-intuitive to think that readers might wish, or require, some further elucidation into the personalities of characters whose development they have followed over the previous four books of the poem, particularly just as the “double sorwe” which Chaucer has promised to tell builds toward its culmination. Rather, the presence of these portraits at the particular narrative juncture is more concerned with enacting a particular kind of reader involvement with the text.

In \textit{Troilus}, the narrative is frequently interrupted by brief lyric interludes, including the \textit{cantici Troili} and the lovers’ epistles. They change the text’s voice, or the reader’s perspective, in a way that is directed inward and contained within the poem itself. The \textit{cantici} dilate readers’ focus on a particular, suspended moment of the poem, adding depth by delving into the sorts of emotional interiority that exposition alone cannot truly convey. Troilus and Criseyde’s letters, in Book V, though they nudge the plot obliquely forward, offer readers instead a glimpse of the ‘truth’ underlying Criseyde’s delay in the Greek camps, expressing characters’ affective experiences and hinting at complexities beyond the progression of the

story itself. The portraits in Book V, likewise, impose a change of mode which halts the narrative, in this case, the static description of three characters.

On the face of things, this narrative suspension is little different from the others, nor particularly out of place, but operationally, the portraits demonstrate remarkable difference. They suspend the narrative in a way that puts more demands on the reader. A lyric interlude that tells us what a character is thinking or feeling is easy to connect to the story that has been halted; the reader doesn’t have to do much work to understand what the connections are. The portraits, in contrast, demonstrate no internal necessity at this particular point in the narrative, nor ties to the events unfolding in the surrounding lines. The reader has to engage in some mental gymnastics to understand the reasons behind their presence at this juncture and how they relate to their larger context. Where the lyric interludes deepen readers’ involvement in a particular part of the story, the portraits pull them out of the narrative, forcing them to ponder not its hidden interior, but its exteriority. They arrest focus on the fact of Troilus, Criseyde, and Diomede’s lives outside of Chaucer’s poem; readers pausing their perusal of the story are given only the three characters to consider, bracketed by prompts to consider them intertextually.¹³⁹

This difference is intriguing at least in part because it can offer us some means of understanding both why J and Gg might preserve only these few glosses, over a scant two folios, and how to differentiate between these Troilus marginalia

¹³⁹ Chaucer begins the portraits by declaring an outside source whence they are drawn; Diomede is painted “as bokes us declare” (V, 799), while Troilus’ portrait is “certeynly in storie ye is yfounde” (V, 834). The poet highlights, then, not merely the intertextuality of the Trojan narrative, but of the portraits themselves; they self-consciously announce their own exteriority.
and those in *The Canterbury Tales*. The source glosses in the latter work enable multiple levels of interpretation, as Kerby-Fulton describes, precisely because they unearth the implicit intertextualities in Chaucer’s verse, playing upon and drawing readers into a network of debates created and sustained by the series of intertexts which form the *materia* of the *Tales* marginalia. The poem and its glosses generate ambiguity that is essentially textual, hinging on differences in the way an earlier source of *auctoritas* can be used and interpreted. The *Tales* source glosses work because they engage a series of larger questions that Chaucer poses about, for example, gender and human sexuality, which have been answered multiple ways, leaving readers to chose the correct answer for themselves.

In *Troilus*, however, ambiguity grows not from conflicting authoritative claims about a shared intellectual topic, but from the characters of the poem themselves. Here, the instability of a given character as a point of reference to a specific textual tradition forges a multitude of textual resonances: Chaucer’s *Troilus* can exist, in the medieval imagination, in a sort of semi-permeable state as the amalgamation of a number of other characters bearing that name. The glosses from Joseph of Exeter’s poem, then, capitalize on a potential that is already present in the English verse. They reinforce the intertextual instability of Chaucer’s characters; they can attempt to direct the field of reference by offering readers a particular textual tradition to consider, but, like the *Tales* source glosses, they cannot close interpretation, or even restrain the proliferation of multiple possible meanings.

Nowhere else in *Troilus and Criseyde* is this intertextual potential as clearly present as it is in the portraits in Book V; nowhere else, then, would Latin source
quotation cue interpretive ambiguity as strongly as J and Gg’s marginalia can. While the poem at large demonstrates a great deal of thematic resonance with Chaucer’s sources—particularly Boccaccio’s *Filostrato*—no other passage in the text crystallizes the slippery referentiality inherent in the Trojan narrative tradition quite as concretely as do Troilus, Criseyde, and Diomede as signs in and of themselves. The presence of glosses in Book V, to the exclusion of the rest of the text, is not as out of keeping with the annotation program in the *Tales* manuscripts as it might initially appear. The *Tales* marginalia operate along a mode of intertextuality that Chaucer can more concretely explore through a text at large. We might theorize that this represents the product of further thought or development in the manuscripts’ apparatus: that marginalia are more fully integrated into *Tales* texts like the “Wife of Bath’s Prologue” and reinforce, more visibly, the hermeneutic of ambiguity precisely because the poet has further considered the kind of intertext that best enables this very ambiguity and has developed the apparatus accordingly.

As challenges go, the differences between the *Troilus* and the *Tales* glosses are not intractable. Indeed, rather, they carry rather significant suggestive import. J and Gg’s potential, though not fully realized, to further develop a hermeneutic of polysemy in the *Troilus*, highlights similarities in the two Chaucerian texts’ manuscript traditions. It is born of the manner in which these select *Troilus* marginalia display certain significant parallels with the later glosses in *The Canterbury Tales*. They are unattributed quotations from a deeply moralizing Latin source, set without further comment in the margins at moments of close textual debt in the Middle English verse. Thus they enable the possibility of hermeneutic
layers, between which readers must navigate to reach a particular interpretation of the poem. They might take the English text at face value, but they could also read further, whether understanding Troilus in the context of Joseph of Exeter’s *Iliad of Dares Phrygius*, or reading deeper still, and interpreting the poem in the context of Joseph’s own source, the shorter but perhaps better-known prose *Dares*, where the polemic of Joseph’s elaborate re-imagining is absent, and sex and love are not condemned as cause of both war and downfall of men in general, nor associated with avarice and Baldwin’s overly ambitious successor in particular.

The differences between the two poems’ manuscript traditions are inescapable, but equally revealing. While *The Canterbury Tales* marginalia can be found in many manuscripts, and distributed through many of the individual tales, from the beginning of the manuscript to the end, the *Troilus* glosses are present in only two manuscripts—and then, one of the two only contains two of the glosses—and are found only in Book V of the poem, concentrated in a space of a single folio. They are taken, moreover, from a text whose Latin was on the difficult side, and whose narrative skeleton was extremely well-known in the Middle Ages, in the form of the vast majority of accounts of the Trojan War, but whose details, particularly those that would be most relevant to a deliberately equivocal resituating of Chaucer’s poem, might not have been well known, and were not the sections of the

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\(^{140}\) In J, the only manuscript of the two to contain all of the glosses from Joseph, they appear on f. 104, with the first gloss copied by the last stanza on 104r, and the remainder set in the outer margin of 104v.

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poem that were included in the manuscripts’ margins. These difficulties ought, however, to be as exciting as they are challenging.

If, then, these marginalia are accepted as Chaucer’s work, the differences in their deployment may illustrate the progression of the Chaucerian apparatus from its conception to its full realization in *The Canterbury Tales*. Those glosses in *Troilus* might be most provocatively understood as a tentative, experimental first step towards the sort of elaborate apparatus seen in the *Tales*: deployed in a less fully-realized manner—not thoroughly disseminated throughout the poem in the manner of *Tales* marginalia, not always placed at the spots that invite key comparisons between English text and Latin source—but with the potential for the sort of rich, hermeneutically ambiguous interplay displayed in the *Tales* manuscripts. Moreover, taken together, the *Troilus* and *Tales* glosses are suggestive of a deeply interactive reading experience that challenges and qualifies scholastically-based approaches to medieval literary criticism. This Chaucerian hermeneutic embraces indeterminacy against the grain of medieval literary commentaries meant to carefully delineate categories for classifying literature and frequently furnish ethically valuable interpretations of a text or a framework for guiding readers’ interpretation.141

141 For broad background in the diverse medieval practices of literary criticism, particularly their roots in biblical exegesis and scholastic commentaries on classical Latin *auctores*, and the at times subtle and elegant ways in which they could be applied, see Alastair Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, 2nd ed. (Aldershot: Scolar, 1988); Alastair Minnis, *Magister Amoris: The Roman de la Rose and Vernacular Hermeneutics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); and Alastair Minnis and Ian Johnson, *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Volume Two: The Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Minnis notes, of course, that these studies address particular branches of the medieval commentary tradition; the full scope of medieval literary theory and criticism is too large and diverse to cover in a single study, and the sort of ambiguous interpretation set forth in the Chaucerian glosses is not, at its heart, incompatible with this full scope. Yet, it diverges from the interpretive practices demonstrated by the critical texts anthologized in collections...
potential to read Chaucer’s verse in orthodox, ethical terms is still immanent in the
text, but it is merely one interpretive choice among the many enabled by the glosses.
The Troilus glosses themselves, moreover, reaffirm scholarly investment in similar
source marginalia. Far from scribal window-dressing and editorial detritus, they
reflect a reading experience enacted as well by untold consumers of medieval
vernacular texts: readers’ source glosses in copies of Troilus, of William Langland’s
Piers Plowman, of even the Roman de la Rose and Dante’s Commedia witness similar
pennants for tracing the stories behind the story, as the next chapters will unfold.
The artifacts of their intertextual engagement, these marginal quotations sit at the
frontier of the manuscript page—and of Middle English manuscript studies—
awaiting further exploration.

like Minnis and Johnson’s, or Fausto Ghisalberti, Arnolfo d’Orléans: un cultore di Ovidio nel secolo XII
(Milan, 1932) and “Mediaeval Biographies of Ovid,” Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes 9
(1946): 10-59; Allison G. Elliot, ‘Accessus ad auctores: Twelfth-Century Introductions to Ovid,’
of Ovid (I),” Medieval Studies 49 (1987): 152-207; Ralph Hexter, ‘Medieval Articulations of Ovid’s
Metamorphoses: From Lactantian Segmentation to Arnulfian Allegory,’ Medievalia 13 (1987), 63-82;
and Alastair Minnis and A. B. Scott, eds., Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism c. 1100-c. 1375: The
Commentary Tradition, revised edition (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988); and argues, particularly when the
glosses are interpreted as an authorial enterprise, for the necessity of reconsidering the critical
approach enacted by these marginalia. See also Alastair Minnis, “De Vulgari Auctoritate: Chaucer,
Gower, and Men of Great Authority,” in Chaucer and Gower: Difference, Mutuality, Exchange, edited by
R. F. Yeager, English Literary Studies 51 (Victoria, BC: University of Victoria Press, 1991), 36-74, for a
discussion of medieval criticism focused on the moral person of the human auctor, with particular
emphasis on Dante, Chaucer, and Gower.
CHAPTER 3:
VERNACULAR AUTHORITIES, TEXTUAL ORTHODOXY, AND THE FIFTEENTH-CENTURY READERS OF THE CANTERBURY TALES GLOSSES

3.1 Introduction

Chapter One traced the early forms of Chaucer’s marginal enterprise, addressing its apparent nascence in Troilus and Criseyde’s authorial glosses and reading them alongside this larger, more complex corpus of glosses in The Canterbury Tales. It argued for sophistication, and a subtlety of execution dependent upon a particular kind of readership, Latin-literate and well-read enough to recognize Chaucer’s sources—each layer in the palimpsest of source material—in order to uncover the complex interactions of its referents. Chapter Two explores the extent to which manuscript evidence suggests that medieval readers were in fact able to engage in such complex, informed reading practices, by tracking the ways that they attempted to change the glosses to fit other models of reading. It turns first, however, to a clearer explication of those theories which refuse to assign interpretive possibility to the glosses. Those arguments, which view the glosses as either superficial formal choices or the frozen trace of composition in action, rest upon modern expectations of authors and of readers which must first be understood
and put to rest before we can begin to uncover the historical readers underneath, and assess their reception of the glosses.

At the intersection of any study of text and the study of its medium lies this very question of contemporaneous audience. The significance of a text’s formal features rests upon its readers, as much as on the individualized details of its material expression—its textual permutations, illustrations, and marginalia. In *The Canterbury Tales*, this is a question of crucial importance; with eighty-three extant manuscripts, the physical track of the poem’s audience leads modern readers inexorably towards befuddlement. Over thirty of the *Tales* manuscripts include some portion of a corpus of glosses, seen in some of the earliest manuscripts of the poem, which traveled with many of its later instantiations. They glosses have, despite growing interest in vernacular English manuscripts, received little critical attention, often discounted as authorial memoranda for future revisions by modern critics who assert, based on their own expectations of what the apparatus should look like, or on their assumptions that the glosses do not comment on the poetic text itself. Yet, these critics likewise dismiss the traces of the poem’s medieval audience, and of larger reading communities of vernacular literature, whose reactions to their manuscripts suggest otherwise. *The Canterbury Tales* glosses do not direct readers to a particular, orthodox interpretation of the text, but they act, nonetheless, as commentary, and their reception in later manuscripts demonstrates medieval readers’ awareness of this potential. To regard these glosses as editorial *memoranda* oversimplifies their function, flattening their complex hermeneutic relationship with the main text of the *Tales*—and misses analogues in literary
manuscripts on the continent, which though demonstrably not notes for future revision, display the qualities that relegate the Chaucerian marginalia to the status of editorial detritus.

The evidence on which an identification of the glosses as editorial memoranda is predicated coalesces largely around concern with their lack of uniformity, both in placement and in source material. The glosses are present to varying degrees in different Tales, with the most plentiful marginalia seen in the Wife of Bath’s Prologue. These glosses are not uniformly distributed throughout the Prologue; rather, they are concentrated on the first half, and taper off during Alisoun’s discussion of her five husbands. Daniel Silvia, arguing that the glosses indicate planned revisions, posits that this reflects the stages of the Prologue’s composition—the latter part having been composed first—and any marginalia evident in the second half would have been incorporated into the Prologue or rejected.

He suggests, furthermore, that the lack of source glossing from Book I chapter 47 of Against Jovinian—the part of the Hieronymic text with the greatest influence on “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue”—is due to a similar process: Chaucer would have used this part of the letter first, and discarded the marginalia after use. The Latin apparatus that traveled with the Tales, he states emphatically, was


\[143\] Silvia, “Glosses to The Canterbury Tales,” 31-33, 37-39.

\[144\] Silvia, “Glosses to The Canterbury Tales,” 29-31.
not intended to comment on or explain the poetry; it was merely a set of Chaucer’s notes to himself, which reflected a lack of completion in the WBP and other texts that would not have been out of keeping for the poet.\textsuperscript{145} I argue, however, that though not intended to directly explicate the poems, the glosses do function as a form of polysemy commentary that had parallels in the marginalia in other vernacular poetic manuscripts. The material evidence of Chaucer’s medieval readership indicates that their contemporaneous reception both recognized this hermeneutic potential, and altered the Latin apparatus in ways that reflected their engagement with, and anxieties about, the potential for unrestrained polysemy literary signification which the glosses enabled.

In \textit{Opening Up Middle English Manuscripts}, Kathryn Kerby-Fulton posits a relationship between Latin and vernacular that provides the possibility of reading multiple interpretations into the text, commensurate with the depth a reader wishes, or is able, to read into the source quotation\textsuperscript{146}. That is to say, selective quotation of a source text means that the text may be read by itself, as it is presented on the page, without recourse to the source glosses’ supplementary recollection, or that readers with knowledge of the source text might, if they so choose, bring that exterior knowledge to bear on their reading of Chaucer.

For the sake of illustration, we can return to the previous chapter’s example from the abundant Latin glossing in “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue”: where the

\textsuperscript{145} Silvia, “Glosses to \textit{The Canterbury Tales},” 38.

command "wexe and multiplye" (III.28) is accompanied by the gloss, "Crescite et multiplicamini" [Increase and multiply],\textsuperscript{147} drawn from St. Jerome, quoting Genesis 1:28 in his Against Jovinian. Its ambiguous intertexts refuse to disclose orthodox meaning, instead providing readers the choice of numerous approaches to the text, built from their individual Latin literacy and the comparative breadth of their reading knowledge, with interpretive outcomes ranging from mild humor at the Wife's ridiculousness to chilling patristic endorsement of her spiritually unreproductive reading of scripture, and the spiritual—if not physical—violence that it engenders.\textsuperscript{148} However, to reach this interpretation of the “Prologue,” readers would be need not only to be Latin literate, but also to be familiar enough with the relevant source texts to recall the context of the source gloss and choose to interpret the text in this context.

This hermeneutic complexity is not unique to The Canterbury Tales. Latin quotations in Piers Plowman could offer the same ambiguous potentiality; manuscripts of texts on the continent which influenced Chaucer include readers’ notes which concern themselves with a poem’s intertexts, identifying or quoting from Latin source material—sometimes both. The manuscript tradition of the

\textsuperscript{147} San Marino, Huntington Library MS El 26 C 9, fol. 63r (hereafter El). See also Kerby-Fulton, Hilmo, and Olson, Opening Up Middle English Manuscripts, 217. For the only complete edition of the glosses, see Stephen Partridge’s unpublished thesis. Stephen Partridge, “Glosses in the Manuscripts of Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales: An Edition and Commentary” (Ph.D. Diss., Harvard University, 1992), III-2. All citations of Scripture taken from Biblia Sacra: Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem, 3\textsuperscript{rd} ed., edited by Bonifatio Fischer OSB, Iohanne Gribomont OSB, H.F.D. Sparks, and W.Thiele (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983). All translations are my own, unless otherwise noted.

\textsuperscript{148} Kerby-Fulton, Hilmo, and Olson, Opening Up Middle English Manuscripts, 217.
Roman de la Rose—to which I return in Chapter Four—betray the traces of readers who, over the centuries after its composition, likewise recorded their responses to the poem across its pages; their marginalia offer particularly relevant points of comparison with those in the Tales, and display parallels to the criteria used to deem the Tales glosses authorial memoranda which belie the glosses’ hermeneutic potentiality.\footnote{149}

These manuscripts display a tradition of glossing that is more varied than that in The Canterbury Tales, in large part because they are copied not necessarily by the scribes, but by later readers. They are French and Latin, verse and prose, represent source texts, related texts, and later additions to the poem. Nonetheless, they demonstrate certain parallels with the Tales glosses that bear upon the identification of the apparatus as a set of authorial ‘Notes to self’; in the fourteenth

\footnote{149 The choice of the Roman de la Rose manuscripts is not as capricious as it might appear. Chaucer’s English contemporaries exhibit few similar glossed manuscripts—some Piers Plowman scribes place the Latin quotations in the outer margins, though it is far from the usual practice, and the Latin summary glosses in Gower’s Confessio Amantis operate rather differently from Chaucer’s, laying out textual meaning for the poem’s readers. See, for more detailed discussion of Gower’s Latin apparatus, and its difference from Chaucer’s, see Derek Pearsall, “Gower’s Latin in the Confessio Amantis,” in Latin and Vernacular: Studies in Late-Medieval Texts and Manuscripts, edited by Alastair Minnis, York Manuscripts Conferences: Proceedings Series 1 (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1989): 14. The glossed texts, meanwhile, of Chaucer’s Italian sources, such as the Anonymous Latin commentary on Dante, or Boccaccio’s vernacular prose glosses on the Teseida, are likewise hermeneutically dissimilar from the Tales glosses, explaining literary allusions and unfolding textual meaning. See, in particular, Vincenzo Gioffari, ed., Anonymous Latin Commentary on Dante’s Commedia: Reconstructed Text, Testi, Studi, Strumenti 1 (Centro Italiano du Studi sull’Alto Medioevo, 1989) and Giovanni Boccaccio, Chiose al Teseida, in Opere Minori in Volgare vol. II, edited by Mario Marti (Milan: Rizzoli, 1970), 659-765. French literature offers the most analogous examples of vernacular poetry with Latin marginalia, in the Rose manuscripts, and in at least one poem of Eustache Deschamps, preserved in Bibliothèque Nationale ms fr. 20029, while literary discussions of textual interpretation not only acknowledged the instability of language’s ability to convey meaning—as did many medieval authors—but at times also embraced it. See in particular Deborah McGrady, Controlling Readers: Guillaume de Machaut and his Late Medieval Audience (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006): 170-189. The Rose itself, with its undeniable influence on medieval literature in general and Chaucer in particular, and its vast corpus of extant manuscripts, is a particularly fruitful source from which to gauge readers’ approaches, interests, and priorities.}
century, these parallels are clearly demonstrated in four key manuscripts. The first of these, BnF fr. 1560, contains few glosses—nine, to be exact—but even these few have some common ground with the *Tales* marginalia. They consist of quotations from Latin *auctores*—Tibullus, Macrobius, Ovid and Aristotle (in Latin translation), among others—and are concentrated largely within the first 15 folios.¹⁵⁰ The second manuscript, Arsenal 3337, is heavily glossed, by at least two different hands. The first set of glosses, added by the scribe, consists mostly of French and Latin proverbs, along with a few quotations from Ovid; the second, a set of nearly 60 glosses taken almost exclusively from the *Ars Amatoria*, is primarily clustered around the teachings of the God of Love in Guillaume’s section of the poem and in Jean’s discourse of Amis, with a very few in the sections of the poem containing Reason’s discourse and the speeches of La Vielle.¹⁵¹

This concentration of glosses is particularly interesting as the *Ars Amatoria* is one of the most influential sources of La Vielle’s dialogue, making the relative paucity of glossing in this section quite surprising—we might compare it to a third manuscript, Turin, Bibl. Univ. L. III. 22, which features a number of readers’ comments, many of them quotations from Ovid, in the discourse of La Vielle—and

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perhaps providing a parallel to the unevenness of the distribution of *Tales* glosses, as well as the lack of glosses from particularly influential sources.\textsuperscript{152} The fourth manuscript, BnF fr. 24390, contains a similar apparatus, with the further additions of a number of citations of relevant Latin material from Gratian’s *Decretum* and Bartholomew of Brescia’s commentary, all of which, like those in Arsenal 3337, are found mainly in the middle of the manuscript, from folio 51 to folio 90, tapering off with La Vielle.\textsuperscript{153} These brief descriptions do not suffice to claim any one *Rose* manuscript as a model for Chaucer’s glosses, but they point towards a tradition of glossing in vernacular verse manuscripts, which demonstrates a similar lack of uniformity that, while it may appear capricious to modern readers, does not require us to term them authorial revision memoranda, by dint of their significantly later origin.

There are, moreover, certain aspects of the relationship between text and gloss in the *Rose* manuscripts that concord with that of the *Tales* glosses. One of the clearest examples of the *Rose* glosses hermeneutic of ambiguity is found on folio 2v of BnF fr. 1560. This folio precedes the beginning of the poem, and is almost entirely blank, but for some transferal of the colors used on 3r’s illuminations and for a set of three glosses, all dealing with the utility of dreams: a longer gloss from Macrobius’ commentary of the Dream of Scipio, a citation of Tibullus, and a brief quotation from Ecclesiastes:

\begin{center}
\textbf{\textsuperscript{152}Huot, The Romance of the Rose and its Medieval Readers, 35-36.}
\textsuperscript{153}Huot, The Romance of the Rose and its Medieval Readers, 63-75.
\end{center}
Nota quod Scipio senator romanus, cum iret in Africam ad destruendum Cartaginem, apparuit ei in sompniis Anchises, pater suus, qui multa ventura sibi revelavit et multa mistica sibi ostendit, quod sompnum postea Macrobius philosophus elegantur exposuit, interserendo multa de philosophia naturali et de scientia mathematicis in duobus commentariis. Et intitulatur liber ille Liber Macrobiit sive Expositiones sompni Scipientis senatoris

Tibullus. Libro ii°. Sompnia fallace ledunt temeraria mentes

Salomon ecclesiastes v°. Ubi multa somnia plurime vanitates.

[Note that Scipio, a Roman senator, when he went into Africa to destroy Carthage, Anchises, his father, appeared to him in his dreams, who revealed many things to come to him, and made clear to him many mysteries, the which dream the philosopher Macrobius elegantly explained, inserting many things from natural philosophy and mathematical knowledge in two commentaries. And the book was titled the Book of Macrobius, or the Expositions on the Dream of Scipio, the Senator.

Tibullus, Book II. Reckless dreams injure minds with deceit

Solomon, Ecclesiastes 5. Where there are many dreams, there are many vanities].

These three glosses interact with the text in a number of ways, at times demonstrating deeper source knowledge than is found in the brief allusion to Macrobius as a witness to the reliability of dreams. These three glosses offer a set of conflicting quotations of auctoritas in which knowledge of the fuller context of the sources in question may suggest vastly different moral interpretations of the poem. In particular, the first gloss represents the source that Guillaume himself offers to

\[\text{154 Bibliothèque Nationale, MS fr. 1560, fol. 2v.}\]
counter the “maintes gens” [many people] who deride the utility of dreams. The second two however, as Sylvia Huot points out, offer instead examples of just those “maintes gens.” Moreover, all three look upon erotic dreams—of which the dream vision in the *Rose* is one—with ill favor: Macrobius identifies them as *insomnia* and the relevant passage of Ecclesiastes deals specifically with erotic dreams. This part of Macrobius’ commentary is not included in the source quotation in 1560’s margins, however, nor is the fuller context of Ecclesiastes, allowing for the possibility of reading the glosses, and the authorizing gestures in the first lines of the *Rose* in more than one light, a relationship between text and gloss that harmonizes with that of the *Tales* and its glosses.

Of course, the sticky wicket in looking to the continent for parallels to the arguably Chaucerian marginalia remains the question of tracing direct lines of

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155 “Maintes gens dient que en songes
Na se fables non et mensonges
Mes len puet tiex songes songier
Qui ne sont mie mensongier
Ainz sont apres bien apparant
Si en puis bien trere agarant
Vn aucteur qui ot non macrobes
Qui ne tint pas songes alobes
Aincois escript lauision
Qui auint au roy scipion”
[Many people say that in dreams, there is nothing but fables, and lies. But one can dream such dreams that are not at all lies, but which later are very clear. One could well call as an authority an author named Macrobius, who did not consider dreams deceitful. He first wrote the vision, which came to King Scipio]. In *Le Roman de la Rose par Guillaume de Lorris et Jean de Meun: Publié d’après les manuscrits*, vol. 1, edited by Ernest Langlois, Société des Anciens Textes Françaises (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1920), 1-10; translation mine.


influence. Modern scholars have, despite the few tantalizing bits of information Chaucer offers, little idea what the manuscripts of the texts that Chaucer worked with actually looked like. He teases us with his oblique reference, in the Book of the Duchess, to a version of the Romance of the Rose that is written—both text and gloss—on the walls of the room in which his insomniac narrator awakens.\footnote{158} Yet, it is impossible to say with any surety that Chaucer actually had access to a glossed Rose manuscript. Derek Pearsall’s Life of Geoffrey Chaucer reminds scholars that the poet spent a great deal of time abroad in France—some of which brought him to parts of the country that housed glossed Rose manuscripts—though it seems unlikely that he would have been in a position to spend a great deal of time touring French libraries.\footnote{159} Derek paints us a richly detailed picture of the influence of French literature in the fourteenth-century English court, but it is nearly impossible to determine what material form this influence took.\footnote{160} Nevertheless, the ties between Chaucer and the French literary scene are undeniable, and the co-mingled reading culture to which they testify, a fertile point of comparison with the marginalia in The Canterbury Tales. Here, even without the evidence for direct

\footnote{158} “And sooth to seyn, me chambre was / Ful wel depeynted... / and all the walles with coloures fyne / Were peynted, bothe text and glose, / Of al the Romaunce of the Rose” (BD 321-334). All quotations from Chaucer are quoted from Larry D. Benson, ed., The Riverside Chaucer, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).


\footnote{160} Pearsall, Life of Geoffrey Chaucer, 63-73.
influence, we find witnesses to glosses mirroring those qualities that have earned the *Tales* glosses the title of editorial *memoranda*, which are present in manuscripts that otherwise negate the possibility of the accidental inclusion of authorial revision notes. They remind scholars of the danger in assuming that modern expectations of what annotation in medieval literature *ought* to look like: what we perceive to be lack of uniformity or a lack of attention to the more “significant” parts of a text, quotation from its most important sources, does not necessarily reflect the interests or values of the medieval reader. We miss out on manifold subtleties, on the *Tales*’ participation in a sort of international reading culture that strays, at first glance, at least, far from the model of scholastic, ethical commentary, and perhaps even on the comfort of knowing that the struggle inherent in understanding what to make of a manuscript is not unique to us.

Yet, still more interestingly, even without direct confirmation of the original intent of the Chaucer glosses, the transmission history of the *Tales* apparatus can provide clues to its reception by fifteenth-century readers whose approaches necessitate a medieval readership capable of playing the *Tales* glosses’ game of polyglot intertextual reference and who, far from discounting the Latin apparatus, read in the marginalia the full scope of their ambiguous hermeneutic potential. This chapter focuses on two case studies of the *Tales*’ later readership, which demonstrate scribal exorcisms of these later readers’ very concrete concerns with, anxieties about, or frustrations over the very polysemous hermeneutic potential represented in the *Tales* glosses, the repeat casualties of scholarly dismissals of the apparatus as textual detritus or the strictly formal verneer of classical *auctoritas*. 98
Perhaps the most compelling evidence that, regardless of their author's intentions, these marginalia were regarded as commentary arrives in the form of editorial revisions to the apparatus itself. Fifteenth-century scribes were no less free to adapt the manuscript presentation of the poem than they were the text itself, and frequently did so, incorporating new material, removing glosses they did not care for, and adding their own comments in the margins of their manuscripts. From the larger editorial campaigns that particular later professional readers enacted in their copies of *The Canterbury Tales* emerges a characteristic reaction to the glosses as intrinsically part of a cohesive Chaucerian text, and one whose polysemous potential demanded control, in some cases, significant restraint from the exuberant ambiguity of the original apparatus.

3.2 Crossing Channel(s): Vernacular Authorities and the Paris *Canterbury Tales*

Professional readers often made changes to the glossing apparatus, adding or removing text within individual source glosses, at times changing the meaning of the gloss, or adding entirely new glosses from the source material. Bibliothèque Nationale *fonds anglais* 39, the Paris manuscript of *The Canterbury Tales*, written ca. 1430 by John Duxworth for Jean d'Angoulême, identifiable as the manuscript’s patron by the presence of his coat of arms in the capital which begins the manuscript’s text, provides us with a particularly illustrative example of the way that scribes adapted the glosses—at times significantly changing the way the gloss interacts with the text—alongside a larger scale reimagining of the shape of the text,
both its *mise-en-page* and the generic readings of the verse which the page's formal aspects enable.

We might most productively begin with a single illustration in the form of the text's revisions to a single gloss, which epitomizes the fluidity with which the *Tales* glosses were treated by later scribes. The glossing apparatus to the Man of Law's Tale traditionally includes a gloss at line 295, where Chaucer begins his lament about the Ptholomaic "firste moevyng," which he characterizes as an unnatural astronomical motion that "crowedst ay / and hurlest al from est til occident" (296-7), allowing Cruel Mars to destroy Custance's marriage. The Latin gloss in most of the manuscripts (23), including Ellesmere, Hengwrt, CUL Dd 4.24, and Oxford Corpus Christi College 198 (all of them very important early witnesses to the *CT* and its glosses), reads:

\[
\begin{align*}
Vnde & \text{ protholomeus libro primo capitulo} \\
Octavo. & \text{ Primus motus celi due sunt} \\
Quorum & \text{ unus est qui mouet totum} \\
Semper & \text{ ab occidente in orientem vno} \\
Modo & \text{ super orbes et c Alius vero mo (-)} \\
Tus est & \text{ qui movuet orbem stellarum} \\
currenicium & \text{ contra motum primum} \\
videlicet & \text{ ab oriente in occidentem super} \\
alis & \text{ diuersos polo et c.}
\end{align*}
\]

Whence Ptholomy in Book I, Chapter 8: 'The primary motions of the heavens are two, of which the first is that which continually moves the whole from east to west in one way, above the spheres' and so forth. Moreover there is indeed a second motion which impels the spheres of the moving stars,
running contrary to the first motion, that is to say, from west to east above the two other poles, et cetera.” ¹⁶¹

The text of the *Almagest* which this gloss cites contradicts the characterization of the first motion which Chaucer lays out in “The Man of Law’s Tale”: the first motion is typically, as both Jill Mann and Larry D. Benson have pointed out, a harmonious movement rather than the conduit of celestial discord.¹⁶²

In the Paris manuscript, the gloss—which, along with the rest of the *Tales* glosses, is incorporated into the text block and written in a script slightly larger and more formal than that of the text itself—changes the text of the gloss so that what it identifies as the first movement is now the motion not from east to west, but west to east, a change which allies the first movement of the gloss with the unharmonious first movement of “The Man of Law’s Tale” text.¹⁶³ Stephen Partridge has suggested that this variant reading “may reflect an attempt to ‘correct’ the Latin by making it conform to the Middle English” of the tale.¹⁶⁴ The glosses then may have been part of the authorial text of *The Canterbury Tales*, but they were open to revision, even when it affected the meaning of the gloss and its interaction with the *Tales*’ main text.

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¹⁶² Benson, *Riverside Chaucer*, 859.

¹⁶³ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS fonds anglais 39, fol. 26 r.

Partridge’s suggested interpretation is intriguing on a number of levels. It underscores an implicit jostling of competing authorities: vernacular (and English vernacular at that) over latinate, poetic versus scientific, contemporaneous and ancient. In the choice to privilege the sense—a particularly intangible and implicit sense, at that, rooted in the tone of the narrative, over the drier explication of the literal motion of the spheres—of the English text and adapting the Latin gloss, d’Angoulême’s Tales manuscript demonstrates an underlying concern with the authority of the vernacular text as the locus of interpretation and signification. It likewise demonstrates an anxiety with the tensions between margin and core text, and with the nature and orthodoxy of meaning that dominate current understanding of scholastically-determined medieval reading models—the kind of anxiety which coalesces around the potentialities of the Tales glosses. In order to begin to understand these anxieties, and to set the kinds of textual emendation made in the gloss from Ptolemy, above, and its tangle of competing vernacular authorities, alongside the manuscript’s altered ordinatio, we must examine the contexts of its copying—its patron, and the politically complex moment(s) of its design and execution. Its contemporaneous framework, in particular, is inexorably bound up in the familial tensions of the Hundred Years War, and the manuscript bears the traces of political and literary tensions which drove its editorial changes.

In 1412, at the age of thirteen, Jean d’Angoulême left France for England as a political hostage in the Hundred Years War, one of seven whose captivity was
assured in the treaty of Buzançais. He would not return for thirty-three years, despite numerous serious attempts to free him either by raising the funds to pay his ransom, or by marrying him to a noblewoman who could afford the costs. Jean’s brother, the poet Charles d’Orléans, likewise found himself hostage in England, after his capture at Agincourt in 1415, and remained in England almost as long as Jean. During this period, both brothers both collected English books and compiled other works; their literary output and its political contexts can help situate fonds anglais 39, and its unique version of the Tales. While in England, Jean appears to have spent his thirty-three-year sojourn in London, Cambridgeshire, and Kent; via his brother, he likewise developed connections to Suffolk, through William de la Pole’s wardenship of Charles—a significant social and literary connection. Jean’s keeping appears to have been entrusted to a single family:

While in England Angoulême belonged until 1421 to the duke of Clarence; from 1421 to 1439 to his widow, Margaret, duchess of Clarence; from 1439 to 1444, to her son by her first marriage, John Beaufort II, duke of Somerset, upon whose death Angoulême passed into the keeping of the duchess dowager, Margaret of Somerset. These different masters, all members of the same family, entrusted the count’s keeping to

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an English squire, Richard Waller, who kept his prisoner first at Clarence’s residence in London, then at the castle of the duchess of Clarence at Maxey, near Peterborough, and occasionally at Groombridge, Kent. So far as the facts can be determined from the unedited itinerary of Angoulême, it seems that he spent all of his time in these three places.168

This means that Jean spent not just the formative years of his young adulthood but almost half of his life—he lived to be 67—exiled by political necessity in a country which had, for longer than he himself had been alive, been engaged in a war with France sprung from the countries’ closeness, such that “war is not merely the cause of Anglo-French separation but the symptom of its fundamental likeness.”169 This sameness colors the landscape of Anglo-French literary composition during the Hundred Years War; its influence pervades Jean’s literary influences.

In The Familiar Enemy: Chaucer, Language, and the Nation in the Hundred Years War, Ardis Butterfield does not discuss Jean’s Canterbury Tales manuscript, but her narrative of the familial conflict between enemies who shared a language,170

169 Ardis Butterfield, The Familiar Enemy: Chaucer, Language, and the Nation in the Hundred Years War (Oxford, Oxford University Press): 2009, 1. This alleged sameness, however, had waned by the end of the fourteenth century. See also Denise N. Baker, ed. Inscribing the Hundred Years’ War in French and English Cultures (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000); and Jonathan Sumption, who likewise argues this connection between England and France, but observes that, when Edward III succeeded to the throne of England, the two countries “were nations growing apart” (262), an increasing distance that underscores the uncertainty of the languages’ relationship among speakers of both English and French. Jonathan Sumption, The Hundred Years War: Trial by Battle I (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990).
170 This was not necessarily true of all groups of English people, or all classes. Ian Short notes that Francophone ability tended to exist within particular locational and class-based categories of people; it was more common among clerical orders and urban populations, and rarely used among lay people living outside of the cities. Ian Short, ‘L’Anglo-normand au siècle de Chaucer: un regain de
even if the differences in their Frenches could generate confusion, misunderstanding, humor, and derision, nonetheless illuminates the challenges of the Paris *Canterbury Tales'* competing vernacular authorities. For Butterfield, the writers she examines—who span countries, languages, genres—have found this sameness generative, and the continuum (semantic and real) from guest to hostage, the “stranger as house-guest who turns out to be the enemy, or worse, the family member who becomes an all too familiar enemy,” becomes both a model for the relationship between the two sides which “often permeate[s] literary exchanges.”

They figure precisely the cognitive dissonance with which Jean was confronted, half a member of the Valois family, half a resident of England where he appears to have developed close relationships—friendship or pseudo-familial—with William de la Pole, who advocated for Jean’s and Charles’ release, even as he was the executor of Charles’ imprisonment.

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Likewise, these complexities permeated the relational statuses of French and English vernaculars, which, Butterfield observes, are not bound along the clear, nationalizing divides which modern disciplinary study has long assumed. Even in Chaucer’s England, the English language does not have the ascendancy generally ascribed to it; in France, supposedly, the French vernacular’s authority suffers in the eyes of contemporary scholars when held against the received narrative of the birth of English literature (and perhaps helped along by English colonialism):

English [is] not the principal—and indeed to all intents and purposes the only—vernacular in England but ... one of two vernaculars, both in use in a relationship lasting several hundred years. ... On the one hand, French is recognized to have been the dominant vernacular for most of the medieval period, on the other, this dominance has always seemed retrospectively compromised by the eventual triumph of English.¹⁷³

The two languages, then, appear authoritative only in negotiation with one another—at least within the confines of England.¹⁷⁴ In the thirteenth-century this situational, negotiational authority is made still the more complicated by the fact that Anglo-French itself was likewise assessed and depicted alongside continental

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¹⁷⁴ Mary-Jo Arn notes that, while “a reading knowledge of French among the English nobility could usually be taken for granted; the reverse could not.” Mary-Jo Arn, “Two Manuscripts, One Mind: Charles d’Orléans and the Production of manuscripts in Two Languages (Paris, BN MS fr. 25458 and London, BL MS Harley 682), in *Charles d’Orléans in England 1415-1440*, edited by Mary-Jo Arn (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000), 61-78, at 78. Charles d’Orléans’ English poetry would, she observes, have been at best “little more than a curiosity on the Loire” (78).
French in a way that made it both French and not, where meaning, humor, and occasional derision are forged out of the assumption that French is understood by all participants in the text and its narrative (readerly and fictional). It plays out textually across a kind of linguistic exchange in which no side emerges as a clear victor—both are “evenly matched.”

What role does Chaucer, and his English play in this contextualization of Jean’s sojourn in England? For Butterfield, Chaucer’s poetry is permeated with the intimate tensions of a conflict like the Hundred Years War. His reception, particularly by his French contemporary, Eustache Deschamps, whose ballade hailing the English poet as “grant translateur” offers a rare, explicit address to the poet, and the most concrete discussion of his work, reacts in complex ways against Chaucer’s Englishness. Deschamps’ regionally-inspired poetry, ballades on France, on Champagne and on Vertus, express a pessimism, and a wariness of a kind of England which ravages and burns the countryside—albeit only rarely with reference to the concept of ‘nation’ in the modern sense. Within this framework,

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175 Butterfield, The Familiar Enemy, 73.

176 Butterfield, The Familiar Enemy, 76. Though many of the overarching points of Butterfield’s argument address the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, here she is discussing in particular depictions of the languages in a number of fabliaux—Renart Jongleur, Jehan et Blonde, Des Deus Anglois et de l’Anel, La Male Honte, and Le Roi d’Angleterre et le Jongleur d’Ely—from the late twelfth through the thirteenth centuries.

Deschamps engages, Butterfield observes, in “all three of the ‘nationalist’ manoeuvres” at work in Anglo-French literature, combining invective and vulnerability, “mythologiz[ing] the English,” while “delight[ing] in using English against itself.”¹⁷⁸ These sentiments come to a head in the *ballade* to Chaucer, where the praise for his skills as translator, who has transplanted the *Rose* to England, mask, Butterfield argues, derision lurking underneath the praise, and a portrait of an English poet who was “both a laughably divergent and threateningly rival source of eloquence.”¹⁷⁹ This treatment of Chaucer’s approach to French literary culture indicates a climate in which a manuscript of his works, like *fonds anglai* 39, is likely to be met in France with some measure of skepticism. English authority is suspect and conflicting, capable of achieving the same eloquence and reknown as French, but in ways that could not escape the very real conflicts between the two linguistic brothers.

Joint-skepticism and interest in English, and England’s French(es), the quagmire of intersecting loyalties and estrangements, these attitudes likewise color Jean and his brother’s captivities. The political realities of their situation were that they “remained a powerful threat to English interests,” yet as they continually attempted to secure their release, they found themselves invested in the language and literary output of their host country. For Charles, this imprisonment was a

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counter-tension to literary output and "a linguistic curiosity that went beyond mere chauvinism";\textsuperscript{180} while in England, he produced collections of poems in French and in English, many of them counterparts across the two languages, but some, both French and English, independent compositions.\textsuperscript{181} For Butterfield this literary output matches Chaucer's in its deep-seated origins in the linguistic and political rivalries of the Hundred Years War; just as "Chaucer's English in the late 1360s or 1370s ... made an exchange with French that involved subjection but also a claim on the future that its political ambitions sought,"\textsuperscript{182} so too did both Charles' French and his English—even as, interestingly, Charles writes a series of poems in praise of his host's wife: Alice Chaucer, granddaughter of the English poet. The poems themselves have been interpreted varyingly as representing a legitimate emotional attachment to Alice, or as displaying rather the knowledge of conventional forms and modes of address expected of lyric verse,\textsuperscript{183} but most significantly, we see


\textsuperscript{182} Butterfield, The Familiar Enemy, 307.

\textsuperscript{183} Pierre Champion, 'La dame anglaise de Charles d'Orléans,' Romania, XLIX (1923), 58; Crow, "John of Angoulême," 89; R. D. Perry, "New Warden: Alice Chaucer and Charles d'Orléans,"
Charles now as ‘grant translateur’ himself, translating French forms and generic expectations into English lyric and authoritative voice. Charles, in his exploration of English composition, writes himself into liminality: his own language is characterized (admittedly, perhaps polemically) as more English than it is French, and his return to France is as much the entry into a strange country as his arrival in England, in which his political exile has made Charles “a stranger to his own language.” Though Charles did not bring his own English compositions back to France with him when liberated, moreover, he did not fully leave behind English auctoritas. He did bring several English manuscripts to the continent, including a devotional English manuscript which he “borrowed from a Carthusian monastery (and never returned),” an “English-looking” manuscript with the lives of English “saints” from English popular traditions, and an English marriage announcement.

Sadly, we have no record of similar literary output from Jean, necessitating some more caution in speaking of his perceptions of both English and French languages and literatures. Charles’ brother’s interest in English literature did not

(paper presented at the 50th International Congress of Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, Michigan, May 14-17, 2015).


185 Butterfield, _The Familiar Enemy_, 307.


187 Some additional details, however, are furnished in Gilbert Ouy’s studies of the two brothers and their manuscripts, including some details of Jean’s and Charles’ shared Anglo-French literary circle in London, during the time in which their residences overlapped. See Ouy, “Deux Frères à l’oeuvre Charles d’Orléans et Jean d’Angoulême compositeurs de recueils,” and in particular,
extend to any extant compositions of his own. Yet like his brother’s, his captivity immersed him in simultaneous longing for his estranged home in France and interest in his new, English one. And, where Charles did not bring his English lyrics back to France with him, Jean brought at least one manuscript of vernacular English verse home with him: BnF fonds anglais 39, the Paris Canterbury Tales. Its composition, like Charles’ lyrics, like Deschamps’ ballades before them and like the myriad Anglo-French fabliaux and lyrics before them, is ensnared in the language and literary politics outlined above, and these tensions drive the changes made to his copy of the Tales. In particular, they enact a concerted attempt to remedy problems of authority and hermeneutic indeterminacy which proliferated in the glosses and were exacerbated by the jostling of competing modes of vernacular authority in which Jean read the poem.

Jean d’Angoulême appears to have been an exceptionally well-read man, one fond of Latin auctores and auctoritas, but not prejudiced against vernacular literature (of a number of linguistic stripes). He was most fond of works of theology and prayer and even transcribed at least one psalter himself.188 The records of his

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188 “Or les livres dont il goûtait le plus volentiers le commerce étaient certainement les livres de liturgie et de prière. Il avait transcrit lui-même tout un psautier et pourtant il en avait quantité d’autres. Le prince était, en effet, avant tout, un croyant et c’est là le premier trait de sa nature.

Le second c’est que sa piété ne l’entraînait pas à l’extase; il était le fervent des œuvres qui, par la réflexion, l’élevaient jusqu’à Dieu. Les livres saints et les ouvrages de théologie étaient les délices de l'instruction de son esprit; les Méditations sur les psaumes, sur l’Ave Maria, sur la fin de
library demonstrate breadth as well as depth; his collection totaled 170 volumes when it was inventoried in 1467, and I quote at length here from Crow's summary of their contents in order to offer some picture, albeit still fragmentary, of his reading interests:

The books in Angouleme's library show his intellectual and moral tendencies. He preferred to all others books of liturgy and prayer. His favorite writers, as shown by the manuscripts most annotated, were St Augustine, St Anselm, St Bernard, St Bonaventura, Pierre d'Ailly, and Jean Gerson. He liked especially moral philosophy, and we may assume he wished to enlighten himself as to his duties both as a man and as a prince. For this purpose he read Friar Lorens' Somme des vices et des vertus, Alain de Lille's Anticlaudianus, and Alain Chartier's Curial.

Though the count read history, he was not much interested in any epoch but his own. To history he seems to have preferred romances, of which he had at least half a dozen. Of poets he read Jean de Meung, Guillaume de Lorris, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. Also he read the marvelous adventures of Marco Polo and of Mandeville.

Theology and moral philosophy first, then romance, history, poetry, and travel books—one sees the count's predilections. Also one sees from a list of his books that most of his authors were Christian, although he included some pagan, e.g., Aristotle, Terence, Cicero, Ovid, and Valerius Maximus.

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Boethius he of course considered Christian. One notes that no copy of Virgil is listed.\textsuperscript{189}

Based on this impressive collection—of many authors, moreover, Jean owned more than one copy; Gustave Dupont-Ferrier observes that Jean had five copies of Aristotle and six of Boethius\textsuperscript{190}—Jean displayed a cultural curiosity on a par with his brother’s; he may not have composed his own verse in English, but he was not likely to have been snobbish about it. Crow assumes, from this portrait, that Jean was the main organizing intelligence behind his \textit{Tales}; Susan Crane observes that this attribution rests on an underlying and fallacious characterization of scribes (in this case, John Duxworth) as a sort of human typewriter, and she suggests the manuscript could as well have been designed by Duxworth to appeal to Jean as to have been designed by Jean himself.\textsuperscript{191} Accordingly, in the analysis that follows, I speak of their editorial genius behind the manuscript in broader terms, the work of Jean and of Duxworth; indeed, not only is this likely the scenario, it also underscores the fraternal linguistic and political tensions which underlie its production.

Here, we return to the crux of this historical background: the manuscript itself, its response to the glosses, and its origins. The Paris \textit{Tales} makes three significant revisions to the usual organization of the text. It excludes a number of

\textsuperscript{189} Crow, “John of Angoulême,” 93.

\textsuperscript{190} Dupont-Ferrier, “Jean d’Orléans,” 45.

the glosses; it migrates those glosses into the main body of the text, copying them in a larger and more formal script; and it foreshortens the a number of tales themselves, adding a series of dismissive glosses at each, which explain why the given tale has been found lacking and been cut short. The first of changes, the exclusion of much of the glossing apparatus, does not appear the result of Duxworth simply not having access to the full corpus. The Paris manuscript includes traditional glosses only to “The Wife of Bath’s Tale,” “The Clerk’s Tale,” “The Man of Law’s Tale,” “The Franklin’s Tale,” and “The Nun’s Priest’s Tale.” While the manuscript was likely copied from whatever exemplars happened to be available to Jean and Duxworth during the period of the former’s imprisonment, and at least one was not particularly good, judging by the number of corrections both men later made to the manuscript, Jean likewise may have had access to better copies of the text (including the one he used to make his corrections), possibly even a copy of the poem from his brother’s wardens, Geoffrey de la Pole and Alice Chaucer.192 Whatever the quality of the text witnessed in Ps, Gilbert Ouy observes that, “… a great deal of work went into it before the end, for it was corrected and revised many times, both by Duxworth and by Jean, and further potions added, apparently whenever there happened to be another copy available that was more complete or better than the original exemplar.”193 More significantly, no other extant copy of the


193 Ouy, “What the Manuscripts Have to Tell,” 50. Both men worked on the manuscript, judging by the presence of both of their hands in its text—Jean copied a number of notes and the
Tales preserves the same selected set of glosses;\textsuperscript{194} if the excisions came from a previous exemplar whose glosses were defective, it does not survive. Moreover, a number of revisions to the text itself demonstrate a tendency to revise for ease of comprehension for a Francophone reader.\textsuperscript{195} At least some revised features of the manuscript stem from Duxworth and Jean’s direct intervention; logically, there is no reason why the manuscript’s other revision, witnessed in no other extant copy, should not also be the product of their design.

The immediate effect of this excision is to reduce the glosses’ ability to present a series of hermeneutically indeterminate interpretations of the text—if there are fewer individual glosses then there are fewer opportunities to reposition the English text against its sources. In the “Wife of Bath’s Prologue,” for example, the sprawling body of marginalia is reduced to only ten sources glosses, all of them, interestingly, with Scriptural antecedents (see Table 3.1):

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\caption{WBP GLOSSES IN PS}
\end{table}

\begin{verbatim}
Table of Contents (Ouy, \textit{La Librarie des frères captifs}, 73). Early scholarship attributed the direction of the manuscript to Jean, on the assumption that scribal practice in general tended to generate ignorant error rather than intelligent intervention (Crow, “John of Angoulême”). Even if, as Susan Crane argues, Duxworth was given a great deal of freedom in the design of the manuscript, it was still carried out with the book’s patron in mind; moreover, Jean’s own activities as a compiler make it seem unlikely that he should have taken an active role in correcting the text without giving any thought of his own as to its design and use.

\textsuperscript{194} See Partridge, “Glosses to The Canterbury Tales,” I-X.

\textsuperscript{195} Crane, “Duxworth Redux,” 17, 28-36.
\end{verbatim}
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37v</td>
<td>Nupcie facte sun in chana galilee et c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quinque viros habuisti et ille quem nunc habes non est tuus vir et c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crescite et multiplicamini et c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38r</td>
<td>Quam obrem relinquet homo patrem et matrem et c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Melus est nubere quam vri De virginibus autem preceptum non habeo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dixit autem iesus vade et vende omnia que habes et da pauperibus et c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38v</td>
<td>vxori vir debitum reddat et c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>vir sui corporis potestam non habet sed mulier et c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39r</td>
<td>Tria sunt que expellunt hominem de domo sua propria. scilicet f[umus] stillicidium et mala mulier et c</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These glosses still reproduce the ambiguous doctrinal conflicts between the Wife’s exegesis and her sources, but they do so from within a manuscript layout that resembles Biblical commentaries: quotations from scripture followed by some commenting text what was likely to be given less visual prominence.

The second editorial change to the glosses, their inward migration into the main text, reinforces the glosses’ diminished capacity to engage in the proliferation of interpretational ambiguity. This new *ordinatio* means that the Latin source glosses now no longer sit alongside their English counterpart, and cannot be taken in by the reader in pseudo-simultaneous fashion; one must precede the other. This deference is almost always paid to the Latin text; this privilege, compounded with
the Latin quotation’s visual prominence on the page, its larger script and greater textura influence draw the eye first to the Latin, then to Chaucer’s verse. The Tales and their glosses shift from a text that is centered on the English verse to a sort of compilation of Latin auctoritas, commented upon by the English text. Whether this was the intent of the manuscript’s design or not, it cannot have gone unnoticed by Jean, himself a compilator who at times engaged in the collection and compilation of extracts of auctores.

If we return, here, to the adapted Ptolomy gloss in the “Man of Law’s Tale,” we might re-assess the ways that its changes appear to express a valuation of the sense of the vernacular text. This choice aligns the authority of the text and its diction with the vernacular, but its simultaneous exercise of the changes to its ordinatio enacts a series of qualifications to the authority. It expresses a difference between underlying authorial assumptions and valuations—the words and the tone of the vernacular are privileged—and the presentation betrays this impulse, instead visually reinforcing a reading in which the Latin gloss is the authoritative one. The discord between Latin word choice, revised to attempt to reflect the meaning Chaucer appears to have meant to convey, underscores the ultimately unorthodox interpretation of his Latin source, and turns the verse’s language back on itself.

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196 Interestingly, this move means that Ps bears a stronger resemblance to the manuscripts of Piers Plowman, whose Latin is almost invariably copied within the text, often in ways that distinguish it visually—red ink or underline, highlighting ink wash, and the like. See for example, C. David Benson and Lynne S. Blanchfield, The Manuscripts of Piers Plowman: The B-Version (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997); Joshua R. Eyler and C. David Benson, “The Manuscripts of Piers Plowman,” Literature Compass 2 (2005): 1-11; Kerby-Fulton et al., Opening Up, 65-79 and 220-221.

197 Dupont-Ferrier, Jean d’Orléans, 53-55.
ultimately undermining the English text, and its presumption of the kind of authority that merits learned marginal Latin commentary in the first place. In the design of Jean’s *Tales*, much as he may be interested in the English poem, his changes to the manuscript’s *mise-en-page* betray a skepticism of the poem’s ability to support any claims to vernacular *auctoritas* which it advances.

The changes to the layout of the glosses witness anxieties with Chaucer’s production of meaning, one which appears related to, if not derived from, scholastic models of literary authorization and interpretation, though in a diffuse manner. The manuscript’s abbreviation of certain *Tales*, however, narrows the scope of the kinds of textual anxieties to which Jean and Duxworth’s editorial campaign addressed itself. In all, seven tales are either trimmed or excised entirely: “The Squire’s Tale” (deemed too silly, “valde absurda”), “The Monk’s Tale” (too sad, “valde dolorosa”), “The Tale of Sir Thopas” is cut still shorter than usual, lasting only 17 lines and ending with “he hadde a semely nose” before it is cut off with the Host’s customary displeasure. “The Cook’s Tale,” “Melibee,” and “The Parson’s Tale” are excised completely, though the verse introduction and conclusion to “Melibee” remain intact. These textual lacunae are not entirely surprising—most of the missing text comes from *Tales* which Chaucer himself foreshortens. Both “The Squire’s Tale” and “The Monk’s Tale” include Latin explanations of the texts’ deficits, copied in the same larger script as the text of the glosses—incorporating these literary value judgements visually into the apparatus of glosses. The other two complete excisions, those of “Melibee” and “The Parson’s Tale”, curiously remove both of the prose texts from the *Tales*; perhaps Jean and Duxworth did not have exemplars for
them, perhaps they simply were not interested in prose. Most fascinating, however, is the foreshortening of “The Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale,” a decision unmatched in the early manuscripts which contain the tale, in which the text is truncated the text by removing the majority of the middle of the poem, from approximately lines 750-1397.

This excision, like those in “The Squire’s Tale” and “The Monk’s Tale,” is justified through a Latin gloss, for all intents and purposes, which dismissively announces that “Maior pars istius fabule est permissa / usque huc quia terminis sunt valde / absurda” [The majority of this tale has been removed up to this point, because its terms are very ‘absurda’]. The valence of “absurda” is unclear—it may simply be “too silly,” as Meredith Clemont-Ferrand translates it; it may be a more troubled dig at the tale, identifying it as in some way unsettling or uncouth. I would argue, in concluding my discussion of this manuscript, for the latter; what is so

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198 The absence of the two prose tales might seem puzzling, particularly in a book written for a religious man who was an enthusiastic reader of theological texts. The reasons for their exclusion are unclear; “The Parson’s Tale” is not included in the manuscript’s table of contents, and seems not to have ever been intended to be included. A rubric indicates that “The Tale of Melibe” is meant to be included in the manuscript, but the text of the manuscript skips from “Hic narrat fabulam suam Galfridus Chaunceris de quodam juvene vocato Mellebeus” [Here, Geoffrey Chaucer tells his story of a certain youth names Mellibe] (Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds anglais 39, fol. 72r) to “Whan endid was my tale of Myllebe,” following two blank pages. The reasons for this blank are unclear. Clermont-Ferrand indicates that Manly and Rickert hypothesized that Jean and Duxworth may have been waiting for an exemplar from which they could copy the text (Clermont-Ferrand, Jean d’Angoulême’s Copy of The Canterbury Tales, 409), though it is not entirely clear where they would then have gotten the links preceding and following the “Tale”. It is possibly that Jean and Duxworth realized that they did not have sufficient space to copy the whole tale, though why they should then skip two pages and begin copying “The Monk’s Tale” is likewise unclear. Whatever the motives for the exclusion, however, it must be noted that neither of these prose tales received the same dismissive commentary to which the “Squire’s Tale,” the “Monk’s Tale,” and the “Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale” were subjected.

199 Paris, BnF fonds anglais 39, fol. 81r.
unsettling, for Jean and perhaps for Duxworth, an audience already clearly concerned with the exercise of literary authority in the manuscript, is the tale’s deep investment in the refusal to foreclose meaning, and its insistence on the impossibility of wisdom derived from auctores to discern truth from deception.

Why, then, excise the vast majority of “The Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale,” once one has elected to include it in a Tales manuscript in the first place? What is it that renders it so ‘absurda’? This choice grows, I would argue, from the nature of its textual antecedents, its roots in alchemical literature. There is a significant distinction to understand, here, between the simple excision of a text—hiding, completely, a tale’s tale with objectionable content, without any allusion to the possibility that it might have been included in the Tales—and the act of overtly calling attention to a text by partially excising it and engaging in a meta-literary explanation of the textual lacunae. The subject matter—alchemy—of the “Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale” is controversial enough itself to be problematic to some readers of The Canterbury Tales, and offer in itself a justification for eliding the “Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale” from a copy of the poem. If d’Angoulême’s objection to the tale

rested solely on its subject matter, it seems more likely that the tale would have
been left out of the manuscript entirely—the fate suffered by “The Cook’s Tale”—
rather than included in a partial form that calls attention to the the abbreviation of
the story and, despite its lacunae, still retains some discussion of alchemy. Before
the tale is cut short, readers of Ps learn that the Canon is a practitioner of alchemy as
the pilgrims are treated to a sales pitch for his services:

“As hoomly as he rit amonges yow,
If ye hym knewe, it wolde be for youre prow.
... I seye, my lord kan swich subtilitee –
... That al this ground on which we been ridyng,
Til that we come to Caunterbury toun,
He joude al clene turnen up-so-doun,
And pave it al of silver and of gold.” (VIII.608-626)

If the objection to the tale were simply its concern with alchemy in general, it seems
counterintuitive to include a speech advocating its potential benefits, particularly as
it is followed up, at first, with the Host’s enthusiastic approbation (VIII.627-632).
This suggests, first, that on its face, alchemy was not an objectionable enough
subject to warrant the excision of a text for that reason alone, and second, it
illustrates some productive delineation between the kinds of targets of charlatanism
that were acceptable to Jean, and those that were not. This is key to understanding
the manuscript’s treatment of the “Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale,” and its relationship to
the problems of textual authority. The narrative continues on to confirm what

Ages,” History Compass 10/12 (2012): 934-45. See also the discussion of the problems of astrology a
parallel discipline, and charlatanism—a charge also leveled at alchemy—in Michael Ryan, A Kingdom
of Stargazers: Astrology and Authority in the Late Medieval Crown or Aragon (Ithaca, NY: Cornell
University Press, 2011), particularly pages 67-68 and 154-61, which deal more explicitly with
alchemy.
readers may already suspect: that the Canon is a fraud, and cannot profit by his
alchemy except through deception, borrowing gold with the promise of doubling it.
The Yeoman’s speech is finally cut short as he promises to begin explaining the
nature of his work. The subject of alchemy, then, has already been introduced and
explored in some detail; it appears to have become objectionable only as it
transitions into the terms of its practice. In order to understand the significance of
these terms, and their elision, it is first necessary to turn briefly to some survey of
the background of alchemical literature, from which the “Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale”
emerges.

What scholarship there is on the “Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale”—once
medievalists moved beyond seeking biographical detail and positing Chaucer’s own
strained interactions with a member of the profession—tends to agree on observing
in the poem, and in its background literature, close links between alchemy and
poetic enterprise. In particular, and most telling for our understanding of why this
particular tale is pared almost to nothing in Jean’s manuscript, alchemy itself was
“as much a textual and hermeneutic discipline”201 as it was concerned with practical
experimentation. Its textual expression rings particularly familiar, transmitted
through a corpus of texts at once sprawling and diverse in its origins, and most
tellingly, “rich in ‘auctoritees’ [and] profoundly intertextual.”202 This indeterminate
intertextuality is represented in the tale itself, characterized as “famously one

201 Mark J. Bruhn. “Art, Anxiety, and Alchemy in the Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale.” In Chaucer

202 Bruhn, “Art, Anxiety, and Alchemy,” 292.
without known sources, but ... exist[ing] within a tradition of Chaucer's close familiarity with alchemy and a plenitude of contemporary alchemical materials.”

This wealth of potential referent points makes it impossible to clearly align the tale with a specific source, referent, context, antecedent. In this respect, it parallels exactly the diffuse recontextualizations afforded by the Tales glosses. Its field of reference “provide[s] a contextual labyrinth ... that can be structured but never structured definitively. ... endlessly self-reflexive, it correlates to no clear external signifiers or interpretants.”

It is a meta-narrative, a tale about interpretation and its impossibilities, saturated with a “self-consciousness and anxiety” about and indeed about truth itself, and about Chaucer's verse as a viable instrument thereof, all concerns over which Chaucer turns, diffusely, throughout The Canterbury Tales, but which appear to “have reached critical proportions” by the end of the poem, as the poet sifts through their pieces abstractly in the “Canon's Yeoman's Tale,” and explicitly in the “Retraction.”

In essence, the “Canon's Yeoman's Tale” grapples with exactly the kinds of indeterminacy which Chaucer's glosses make available to his readers. It is a Canterbury tale “about the impossibility of reaching a conclusion,” in which Chaucer's “language both delight[s] and founder[s] in its own ‘multiplicacious’ of

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204 Collette, “Alchemy of Imagination,” 243-44.

205 Bruhn, “Art, Anxiety, and Alchemy,” 301.
Al is in veyn, and parde, muchel moore.
To lerne a lewed man this subtiltee –
Fy! Spek nat therof, for it wol nat be.
And konne he letterure or konne he noon,
As in effect, he shal fynde it al oon. (838-47)

The tale explicitly pits expected modes of knowledge—the clerical, the literate, the readers of books, all invested, seemingly, in a textual truth that whether philosophical or theological still cleaves to ethical or scholastically-based reading practices—against the openly false, and finds them consistently lacking. Here, one might theorize why earlier discussion of alchemical fraud, retained in Ps, are not worth cutting: it is of no great significance to the tale’s representation of learning and authority if the Host is taken in by the Canon’s fraud. He has no textual knowledge that might be betrayed by his apparent interest in the Canon and his craft.

The “Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale” proffers readers a narrative that espouses, overtly, the insistence on the inutility of ethical reading. Its stated contempt for literary study dismisses the essential raison d’être of the scholastic models of literary and authorship theories in which Jean d’Angoulême was likely well versed, and which dominate contemporary scholarship on the subject. That Jean should find something “valde absurda” in the tale would not prove surprising; that a voracious reader of theology and moral philosophy might see something of himself and his concerns in the kinds of readers openly mocked by the Canon’s Yeoman, and disenfranchised by the hermeneutics of the Tales glosses would likewise come as no great surprise. The tale brooks no space for authoritative wisdom to shield readers from immorality; it rejects the primacy which these theories assign to the truth that
defines an *auctor*, a source of *auctoritas*. In excising the greater part of the tale, the Paris *Canterbury Tales* bespeaks its continued anxiety over not only the possibility of exercising literary authority in the English vernacular, but also the value assigned to these authorities in the first place. In paring the “Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale” of its actual narrative, Jean and Duxworth refuse to disclose the possibility of this alternative approach to reading. In adding the lines of Latin which explicitly dismiss the tale as “valde absurda,” they engage readers familiar with the alchemical literary tradition, directing them to likewise dismiss the validity of the indeterminacy espoused by the “Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale”’s laybrinth of analogues. In drawing the Latin glosses into the central text block, they reaffirm the validity of scholastic models of latinate *auctoritas*, its deserved primacy, and the practices of reading which embrace the value of single hermeneutic truth.

3.3 Masters of Manipulation: Ad1, En3, and the Orthodox Reshaping of the Gloses

The Paris *Canterbury Tales* represents a concerted attempt to adapt the *Tales* manuscript presentation to alleviate anxieties about the nature of textual authority and interpretation, but it does so in a manner that deals glancingly with the glosses, concerned more with their visual representation of authority than with their deeper functions. The Paris manuscript is, however, not the only copy of the *Tales* to engage in a sustained campaign of marginal revision; the extant *Tales* tradition demonstrates still deeper concern with the possibility of orthodox reading inherent in the *Tales*. Fifteenth-century English professional readers carried out extensive editorial revisions to the apparatus; their changes demonstrate still more clearly the
connections medieval readers were able to draw between the Latin glosses, the multiple textual voices that spoke alongside the English verse, and the impossibility of satisfactorily closing interpretation of the text. As the Chaucerian text with the most significant Latin source glossing, the “Wife of Bath’s Prologue” provides, once more, the most significant case study in later medieval attempts to lock down interpretation and restrict the unbridled intertextual production of meaning in the Tales’ source glosses. The greatest, and most provocative changes are those found in two fifteenth-century manuscripts: British Library MSS Additional 5140 and Egerton 2864 (hereafter referred to as Ad1 and En3, respectively); accordingly, the remainder of this analysis focuses on these two manuscripts.

The apparatuses in Ad1 and En3, two manuscripts copied from the same exemplar, occur in differing degrees of editorial intervention. At their most

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207 Though not as prolific as in the “Wife of Bath’s Prologue,” the remainder of the Tales also display this instinct toward editorial revision to the glosses, as later readers copied some marginalia and not others, or added their own annotations. Among the more notable of these changes, in Bibliothèque Nationale, MS fonds anglais 39 (hereafter Ps)—which dramatically edits the number of marginalia, while copying those that remain within the text block of the Tales, in a larger and more formal hand—a gloss from Ptolemy’s Almagest, which contradicts Chaucer’s description of the ‘Firste movere’ is altered so that in Ps it agrees with the Middle English text: “Vnde ponit haloneus (properly, Ptholemeus) libro primo capitulo octavo. Primus motus celi duo sunt quorum vnus est qui mouet totum semper ab occidente in orientem vnomodo super orbes et c Alius vero motus est qui mouet orbem stellarum currcencium contra motum primum videletic ab oriente in occidentem super alios diversos polos et c” [Whence Ptholomy, Book 1, chapter 8: The first motion of the heavens are two: one of which is that which always moves everything from west to east in one way, under the spheres, etc., The other, truly, is the motion that moves the orbs of the hastening stars against the first motion, that is, from east to west, above the other diverse poles, etc.] (fol. 26r).

A number of other glossed manuscripts of the “Wife of Bath’s Prologue” demonstrate similar editorial impulses, though rarely to the same degree as Ad1 and En3; they tend to concentrate on providing citation along with the quotation, only occasionally altering the text of the quotation itself.

209 The stemma of extant Canterbury Tales glosses is of course rather complicated, and a direct route of transmission from Ellesmere itself to difficult, but not entirely impossible, to trace. Manly and Rickert group Ad1 and En3 as an independent pairing, based on word difference, but
simple, they repeat the brief Latin quotation in El, but add a citation of the text’s original source in Scripture. Thus, at III.81, the Wife of Bath gleefully informs readers that Saint Paul could do no more than advise Christians to preserve their virginity: “But nathless, thogh that he wroate and sayde / He wolde that every wight were swich as he / Al nys but conseil to virginitie” (III.80-82). In El, and the three other manuscripts that most closely adhere to this earliest set of glosses, the marginal text reads, “Volo autem omnes homines esse sicut meipsum,” [I prefer, moreover, that all men were just like myself], a quotation that Steven Partridge suggests likely comes to the author by way of Jerome’s Against Jovinian.²¹⁰ In Ad1 and En3, however, the gloss reads, “Volo autem omnes homines esse sicut meipsum based on tale order, assign the two manuscripts to the same group as Ellesmere. Charles Owen seems unsure what to do with Ad1 and En3, assigning Hk as their exemplar, floating somewhere on the stemma several exemplars removed from the earliest manuscripts. However, Peter Robinson’s work on computer-assisted stemmatic analysis, made possible through The Canterbury Tales Project, offers more promising avenues of descent in various studies of the stemmata of the “Wife of Bath’s Prologue.” In Robinson’s grouping, Ad1 and En3 fall within Group O—which also includes British Library MS Additional 35286 (Ad3), another manuscript witnessing the Ellesmere glosses—a disparate grouping of manuscripts that nevertheless, along with El and (Cambridge University Library MS Dd.4.24 (Dd), are particularly close witnesses to Chaucer’s original copy. Of course, despite the convolutions of the Tales stemma, the presence of glosses at the same passages of the “Wife of Bath’s Prologue,” often quoting similar Latin source passages built around the same kernels of Scriptural text are deeply suggestive of the influence of El and its glosses on Ad1 and En3, even if the marginalia have traveled through other exemplars along the way, making it possible to speak of editorial changes to the El apparatus, preserved in the extant witnesses Ad1 and En3. See John M. Manly and Edith Rickert, The Text of The Canterbury Tales Studies on the Basis of all Known Manuscripts, 8 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940); Charles A. Owen, The Manuscripts of The Canterbury Tales, Chaucer Studies 17 (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1991); Christopher J. Howe, Adrian C. Barbrook, Matthew Spencer, Peter Robinson, Barbara Bordalejo, and Linne R. Mooney, “Manuscript Evolution” Endeavor 23 (2001): 121-126; and Peter Robinson, “A Stemmatic Analysis of the Fifteenth-Century Witnesses to The Wife of Bath’s Prologue”, in The Canterbury Tales Project: Occasional Papers, vol. 2, edited by Norman Blake and Peter Robinson (London: Office for Humanities Communication, 1997), 69-132.

²¹⁰ El fol. 64r; Partridge, “Glosses in the Manuscripts,” III-1. Partridge follows Silvia in attributing the glosses to Jerome; see Silvia, “Glosses to The Canterbury Tales,” 29.
Apostolus ad Corinthios.” The change is simple, but its implications far-reaching: where the original format of the gloss creates ambiguity through its refusal to disclose a specific intertext, the accompanying citation in Ad1 and En3 attempts to forestall interpretive uncertainty by implicitly diverting readers away from Against Jovinian, and explicitly guiding attention to the quotations’ origins in Scripture.

The Latin apparatuses of Ad1 and En3 is characterized by this apparent preference for narrowing the field of reference in the Tales glosses, but it is quite rare that they do so through citation alone. Rather, the editorial changes compass an impulse not only to direct readers away from the influence of Against Jovinian and toward Scripture, but also for filling in the larger contextual picture, particularly where the connotations of the biblical verse differ from those of Jerome’s text. The glosses’ editor tends to accomplish this through the addition of scriptural citation and expansion of the source quotation. In the above example of the Ellesmere gloss at III.28, with which Kerby-Fulton outlines the markedly different ways in which each source text could color Chaucer’s verse, the scriptural endorsement of human sexuality devolves into a metaphoric precursor of death—physical and spiritual—and perhaps emasculation. The gloss in Ad1 and En3 echoes the text of its

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211 Ad1 fol. 89r; En3 fol. 82v. The three manuscripts that almost always correspond with El are Ad3, Bodleian MS Rawlinson poet. 141 (Ra1), and Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.15 (Tc2), the first of which is grouped, in Robinson’s analysis “in the same group as Ad1 and En3, and may help pinpoint, as closely as we can, the point at which the Latin apparatus underwent the changes manifested in Ad1 and En3. The glosses quoted here from Ellesmere are shared across the other manuscripts in this group. Robinson, “A Stemmatic Analysis of Fifteenth-Century Witnesses,” 69-132.
predecessor—with citation—but includes far lengthier quotation. El’s “Crescite et multiplicamini” [increase and multiply] thus becomes:

\[
\text{Crescite et multiplicamini Genesis ii.° viii.° et ix.° \text{bis} \text{Quamobrem}\text{ relinquet homo patrem et matrem suam et adherebit vxori sue Genesis ibid Relinquet homo patrem et matrem suam et adherebit vxori sue Apostolus ad Philippenses Siquidem et duc \text{properly duae} vxores David captiue fuerat Achinoen Israelites et Abigail vxor Nabal Carmeli Regum primo Capitulo xxx.°}
\]

[Increase and multiply Genesis ii.° viii.° and ix.° twice, Therefore man shall leave his mother and father and cleave to his wife Genesis, the same place, Man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, the Apostle to the Philippians, Since two wives of David were taken captive, Achinoen the Israelite and Abigail wife of Nabal of Carmel, Kings [book] one, chapter xxx.°].

Where the Ellesmere gloss attends selectively to the text, highlighting only the advice to “wexe and multiplye” (III.28), arguably through the lens of Against Jovinian, Ad1 and En3’s editorial reader attends to the larger significance of the passage, acknowledging as well Alyson’s reminder that biblical authority dictates that her husband “Sholde lete fader and mooeder and take to me” (III.31), incorporating both references into a marginal approbation of marriage in which the command to increase and multiple is clearly figured as a physical mandate, the

\[212\] El fol. 63r.

\[213\] Ad1 fol. 88r; En3 fol. 81v.
of matrimony—the earthly bond between a man and woman, and not man and the Church, as Jerome envisions it—and not conversion.\textsuperscript{214}

The gloss concludes, curiously, with a passage that is not incorporated into the Middle English verse itself: the citation of 1 Kings chapter 30, in which David retrieves his captive wives from the Amalecites after the destruction of Siceleg. Since demonstrably not a source gloss, as the two Genesis quotations are, the excerpt from Kings must have been included for some perceived thematic relevance; at its most basic, the biblical passage provides an object-lesson in the lengths to which a husband might be obliged to go in order to cleave to his wife. In this sense, at least, David’s pursuit of the Amalecites provides a source of auctoritas, in the form of an Old Testament patriarch, testifying to the importance of the marital bond. Yet, if the editor of these glosses is a careful reader, as seems likely given the extensive quotation of additional appropriate scriptural material in Ad1 and En3’s glosses, the story of David and the Amalecites picks up, and subtly comments on, one further part of the passage. As the Wife argues that God commanded her husbands to leave their families and take to her, she observes, “But of no nombre mencion made he / Of bigamy, or of octogamy” (III.32-33). Jerome’s exegesis of the command to go

\textsuperscript{214} In addition, the gloss “Relinquet homo patrem et matrem et adherebit vxori sue et cetera” can be found in a further nine manuscripts: Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 198 (Cp), British Library MS Harley 1758 (Ha2), Lichfield Cathedral MS 2 (Lc), Bodleian MS Laud 600 (Ld1), Northumberland MS 455 (Ni), Petworth House MS 7 (Pw), British Library MS Sloane 1685 (Sl1), Oxford, New College MS 314 (Ne), and Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale fonds anglais 39 (Ps). Two of these—Ps and Ne—preface this gloss with “Crescite et multiplicamini et cetera”. For Jerome’s equation of marital love with love of the Church, see Against Jovinian I.22 (16). All citations of Against Jovinian taken from Jerome, \textit{Libri duo adversus Jovinianum}, edited by J.-P. Migne, Patrologia Latina Cursus Completus 23, reprint (Paris, 1845; Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), 221-338. Citations refer to the 1997 edition.
forth and multiply concludes, in Against Jovinian, with a clear denunciation of second marriage, which, he claims, is not permitted even to birds and beasts.\textsuperscript{215} Among the spoils, however, that David wrests away from the Amalecites are two of his wives—Achinoen and Abigail—who offer clear evidence that in the world of the Old Testament patriarchs, the injunction to be fruitful was hardly restricted to a single spouse.

Ad1 and En3 handle the subject of marriage itself, whether monogamous or plural, in a far more permissive light than its authoritative predecessor in the El glosses. Their approbation is codified in the treatment of a cluster of marginalia appended to Alyson’s reminder that the Apostle Paul advises Christians that “Bet is to be wedded than to brynne” (III.52). The vast majority of the manuscripts that contain some version of the Latin apparatus include here the gloss “melius est nubere quam vri” [It is better to marry than to burn].\textsuperscript{216} The quotation ultimately derives from Paul’s first epistle to the Corinthians, where it is used specifically to justify the remarriage of widows: “Dico autem non nuptis et viduis: bonum est illis sic maneant, sicut et ego. Quod si non se continent, nubant. Melius est enim nubere, quam urī” [I say to the unmarried, and to widows: it is good for them if they continue thus, even as I. But if they do not hold themselves back, let them marry.

\textsuperscript{215} “ne in bestiis quidem et in immundis avibus digamia comprobata sit” [Not even in beasts or in unclean birds may bigamy be justified] Against Jovinian I.22 (16).

\textsuperscript{216} Variations on this gloss exist in the following mss: Ad1, En3, Ad3, El, Ra1, Tc2, Cp, Ha2, La, Lc, Ld1, Nl, Ps, Pw, SII.
For indeed, it is better to marry that to burn.\textsuperscript{217} It is a particularly apt point of auctoritas for the Wife’s justification of her own marriage practices, for though she speaks of bigamy, nothing of her account of her marriages suggests that she has ever been married to more than one man at a time. Well aware of her inability to hold back, she has followed the advice laid out in 1 Corinthians to a tee, and a reader encountering the gloss alongside Alyson’s lively screed might recognize the legitimacy of her arguments, or find humor in the way they play against the misogynist traditions she fights. In Jerome’s polemical take, however, the claim that it is better to marry than to burn represents not approbation of marriage, but only the lenient suggestion of a slightly less evil alternative to fornication and damnation. Paul does not, he argues, say that marriage is good—merely that it is better than temptation and damnation, just as it is better to limp on one foot than to crawl with two broken legs—a violent comparison that leaves little doubt that in Jerome’s mind marriage is to be equated with physical pain and the weakness of disfigurement.\textsuperscript{218}

In El, and every other manuscript apart from Ad1 and En3 that witnesses this gloss, it is presented without citation, leaving interpretation, the choice of context in which to read the English verse rests with the reader.

\textsuperscript{217} 1 Corinthians 7:8-9.

\textsuperscript{218} "Melius est nubere, quam uri. Ideo melius est nubere, quia pejus est uri. Tolle ardorem libidinis, et non dicet, melius est nubere. Melius enim semper ad comparisonem deterioris respicit, non ad simplicitatem incomparabilis per se boni. Velut si diceret: Melius est unum oculum habere, quam nullum: melius est uno initi pede, et alteram partem corporis baculo sustentare, quam fractis cruribus repere" [It is better to marry than to burn. For this reason is it better to marry, because it is worse to burn. Take away the flame of lust, and he will not say, it is better to marry. Indeed, better always regards something worse, not simply incomparable good in itself. Just as if he may have said: It is better to have one eye than none: it is better to stand on one foot, and to support the other part of the body with a staff, than to crawl on broken legs] Against Jovinian I.9.
In El, the quotation of 1 Corinthians is packaged within a frame of other
glosses that significantly qualify Paul’s leniency. I reproduce the text of the Wife’s argument here:

He seith that to be wedded is no synne;  
Bet is to be wedded than to brynne.  
What reketh me, thogh folk seye vileynye  
Of shrewed Lameth and his bigamye?  
I woot wel Abraham was an hooly man,  
And Jacob eek, as ferforth as I kan;  
And ech of hem hadde wyves mo than two (III.51-57)

At III.51, immediately preceding the Pauline gloss, El’s margins read, “Si acceperis vxorem non peccasti et si nupserit virgo non peccavit sed hij domino se vouerunt Ita idem et cetera” [If you take a wife you have not sin and if a virgin marry, she has not sin, however, thus also, those who consecrated themselves to the Lord, et cetera].  

The gloss attributes no sin to marriage, but in its Hieronymic context, it establishes a clear preference for virginity and a blatant condemnation of remarriage whose vitriol is not echoed in Jerome’s Pauline source, where the Apostle merely acknowledges, “Si autem acceperis uxorem: non peccasti. Et si nupserit virgo, non peccavit. Tribulationem tamen carnis habebunt huiusmodi. Ego autem vobis parco.” [If you take a wife, you have not sinned. And if a virgin marry, she has not sinned. They will have tribulation of the flesh, even so. However, I would spare you that].  

Though Paul admits a preference for sparing his audience the tribulation of the flesh that accompanies marriage, he stops far short of Jerome, for whom tribulation of the

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219 El fol. 63v

220 1 Corinthians 7:28.
flesh negates the joys of the flesh that are the sole attraction of marriage. Here, Jerome argues that a virgin who dedicates himself or herself to God and then subsequently marries “habebit damnationem” [will have damnation], in the same stroke deeming consecrated virgins who marry to be incestuous, and widows who remarry to be adulterous: “Si autem hoc de viduis dictum objecerit, quanto magis de virginibus praevalebut, cum etiam his non licet, quibus aliquando licuit! Virgines enim, quae post consecrationem nupserit, non tam adulterae sunt, quam incestae” [If however, he objects that this saying is about widows, how much greater does it have force regarding virgins, since it is forbidden even to those (widows) to whom once it had been allowed. For virgins who marry after consecration are incestuous rather than adulterous]. In such a context Paul’s express admission that widows who cannot remain chaste may remarry is elided in the face of the assertion that to do so would be to commit adultery; the leniency extends only in Jerome’s polemics, to first marriage. Indeed, Jerome goes on to tackle a similarly permissive statement in 1 Timothy, that “Volo ergo iuveniores nubere, filios procreare, matres familias esse, NULLAM occasione dare adversario maledicti gratia” [I wish, therefore, that the young widows marry, bring forth children, be the heads of households, to give no occasion to the adversary to curse them]. The Apostle says, Jerome argues, that it is better that a woman remarry because “tolerabilius est uni homini prostitutam esse, quam multis” [it is more tolerable to be a prostitute to one man

\[221\textit{Against Jovinian I.13}\]

\[222\textit{1 Timothy 5:14.}\]
than to many]. If first marriage, for Jerome, is tolerable but not good, subsequent marriages, no matter the number, are always figured as not a morally acceptable alternative to fornication, not the beginning of a fruitful family life, but merely a restriction of the extent to which its inherent sin is spread, for the remarried woman is still a prostitute, even if she reserves her services for one man.

The gloss which concludes this sequence, in El, associates still worse crimes with the marital practices the Wife attempts to defend. At III.54-57, above, she clearly responds to the association of serial remarriage with bigamy, citing precedent in the Old Testament patriarchs. In El, this is accompanied by a third gloss: “Lameth qui primus intrauit bigamiam sanguinarius et homicida est et cetera / Abraham trigamus Iacob quatrigamus” [Lamech, who first entered into bigamy was bloodtained and a murderer / Abraham (was) a trigamist, Jacob, a quadrigamist]. There may be Old Testament auctorites for multiple marriage, the gloss reminds readers, but they are hardly worth emulating, their actions tainted by association with the first bigamist’s bloodthirsty, murderous past. Jerome extends this violence inward: Lamech’s violence is not only to be found in his homicidal nature, but is self-inflicting as well, for in committing bigamy, he divided the single flesh of marriage between two spouses: “Et erunt, inquit, duo in carne una: non tres, neque quatuor, alioquin jam non duo, si plures. Primus Lamech sanguinarius et

223 Against Jovinian, I.14

224 El fol. 63v. The gloss is likely taken from Against Jovinian 1.20 (14). Partridge notes that the language of the gloss does not correspond exactly to Jerome’s though they are close; see Partridge, “Glosses in the Manuscripts,” III-5

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homicida, unam carnem in duas divisit uxorès” [And they will be,’ he says, ‘two in one flesh’: not three, nor four; otherwise, they are no longer two, if they are many. Lamech, a bloodthirsty man and a murderer, first divided one flesh between two wives].²²⁵ In order become one flesh with a second, or third, or fourth spouse, the would-be bigamist must divide his own flesh in an act of spiritual—though literally phrased—self-violence that renders the process as uninviting as the implication that it is an act of prostitution.

Even then, these are the lesser allegations Jerome raises against multiple marriage. In Genesis, Lamech compares himself—unfavorably—with Cain, confessing to his wives that he has killed a man with his own hands, and will be punished accordingly: “Dixitque Lamech uxoribus suis Adae et Sellae: Audite vocem meam uxorès Lamech, auscultate sermonem meum: quoniam occidi virum in vulnus meum, et adolescentulum in livorem meum. Septuplum ultio dabitur de Cain: de Lamech vero septuagies septies” [And Lamech said to his wives, Adah and Zilah: ‘Hear my voice, wives of Lamech, heed my sermon: for in my distress I have killed a man, and an adolescent, in my spite. Seven times retribution was given concerning Cain, seventy-seven times, truly, concerning Lamech].²²⁶ In Genesis, the cause of Lamech’s punishment is clear: he expects fair retribution for the murder of another. Against Jovinian attributes the cause, rather, to Lamech’s bigamy: “fratricidium et digamiam, eadem cataclysmi poena delevit. De altero septies, de alter septuagies

²²⁵ Against Jovinian 1.14.

septies vindicatum est. Quantum distant in numero, tantum et in crimine.”

[Fratricide and digamy together were destroyed by the punishment of the deluge. Concerning the one seven times vengeance, the other seventy times seven. As far apart as they are in number, so are they in sin]. The harsher punishment is to be visited upon Lamech for his graver sin, and fratricide expressly preferred to bigamy. The marginal treatment of this passage offers readers the choice of two vastly different contexts against which they might read the “Prologue.” At its core, the gloss still offers readers Genesis’s matter-of-fact acceptance of polygamous practice and the lenient Pauline context with which to align their interpretation, but it presents them, equally, with the misogynist, polemic Hieronymic equation of remarriage with adultery, prostitution, and murder.

In Ad1 and En3, the ambiguous field of reference is restricted to its scriptural sources. The gloss from 1 Corinthians is, here, part of a single long gloss which elaborates significantly on Alyson’s citation of both the Apostle’s approbation of marriage and the Old Testament patriarchs’ multiple spouses:

Propter fornicationem autem vnumquisque suam vxorem habeat et vnaquaque suum virum habeat Apostolus ad Corinthios Melius est enim nubere quam vri Apostolus ad Corinthios Matusael genuit lameth qui accepit duas viores Genesis iii.º Abraham vero aliam vxorem duxit Genesis xxv.º Et Labam Vespelyam [properly vespere Lyam] filiam suam introduxit ad eum .i. Iacob Genesi xxx.º et postea ibidem et et ebdomoda transacta Rachel duxit in vxorem .i. Iacob.

[However, on account of fornication, let each man have his wife, and let each woman have her husband, the Apostle to

227 Against Jovinian 1.14.
Corinthians; Indeed, it is better to marry than to burn, the Apostle to Corinthians; Methuselah begat Lameth, who took two wives, Genesis iii°; Indeed Abraham took another wife, Genesis xxv°. And in the evening, Laban brought his daughter Leah in to him, that is, Jacob, Genesis xxx°, and in the same place, after the week was completed, he, that is, Jacob, took Rachel as a wife.\[228

Where the El gloss prefaces the verse permitting widows to remarry with oblique praise of consecrated virginity and denigration of remarriage, Ad1 and En3 preface it instead with parallel permissiveness granted to first marriages. Just as widows who cannot remain chaste are better off if they remarry, so are virgins encouraged to marry, rather than commit fornication. The passages of 1 Corinthians quoted in these two manuscripts do admit a preference for virginity—Paul begins by stating, “bonum est homini mulierem non tangere” [it is good for a man not to touch a woman]\[229—yet marriage, and more importantly, for Alysoun’s case, the remarriage of widows, are presented as viable alternatives to virginity for those who are afflicted with carnal desire, rather than sinful acts.

The remainder of the gloss consists of a series of quotations from Genesis, identifying the sources of the Wife’s allusions to bigamous Old Testament patriarchs. These, explicitly attributed to their original, Scriptural sources, circumnavigate the condemnations suggested by the El gloss’ association with Against Jovinian, offering readers instead a different, straight-forward narrative in which marriage, multiple or otherwise, is figured as generative, the vehicle of the

\[228 Ad1, fol. 89r; En3, fol. 82r.

\[229 1 Corinthians 7:1

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growth of the human race. The passages quoted and cited from Genesis are drawn from the *libri generationum* of the Old Testament patriarchs, describing the lines of descent of humanity, first from Adam, then from Noah, from Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac, and finally, from Jacob. Lamech, the gloss informs readers, was begotten by Methusaleh, and then took two wives. The passage continues, in Genesis 4 and again in Genesis 5, to enumerate the descendents that he fathers with each wife; his marriages are defined by their procreativity.\(^2\) In the first instance, Lamech is descended from Cain, and his wives are numbered and named; it is from this passage that the text of the gloss is drawn. In Genesis 5, Lamech descends, rather, from Seth, and nothing is shared of his wives. In each case, however, the unions are clearly fertile, one in a chain of men who are born, marry, and produce heirs that repeat the process.

Abraham, too, engages in additional marriages, cited in the margins of Ad1 and En3 from Genesis 25:1. The choice of citation here is curious; it passes over his union with Hagar, the handmaid of his first wife, Sarah, in silence, choosing instead to quote from the passage in which, after Sarah's death, a widowed Abraham remarries, presenting the patriarch as less a bigamist than a serial monogamist, much like Allysoun herself. His new wife, Keturah, bears him several additional children, and the text of the chapter enumerates his descendents, through Katonah, through Hagar's son Ismael, and finally through his favored son, Isaac.\(^2\) Abraham's


\(^231\) Genesis 25:2-4 and Genesis 25:12-25.
polygamy is refigured like Lamech’s before him as a powerful generative force, and he, as the father of nations. Readers of Ad1 and En3 might still see the ironic humor in this defense of bigamy in the hands of the Wife of Bath, whose marriages have been anything but fruitful, but the potential to read further, to the criticisms leveled by Jerome, is foreshortened by the editorial changes to the marginalia.

Alysoun’s final choice of auctorite, Jacob, likewise presents a curious decision, as Jacob’s bigamy stems from the deceit of his father-in-law, who promises him one bride and delivers another. The text of the gloss in Ad1 and En3 highlights the deception as much as it does Jacob’s multiple marriages, with the quotations in the gloss book-ending a narrative in which Jacob—anointed the father of a nation by God—seeks only monogamous union with Rachel. Between the two acts of marriage, recorded in the margins of Ad1 and En3, the text of Genesis unfolds a narrative in which Jacob's bigamy is definitively entered at his father-in-law’s wishes, following the bait-and-switch of his first marriage. The editorial hand responsible for these changes to the marginalia chooses then to privilege not the censure which the Wife claims is directed towards the Old Testament bigamists, but

232 “Et vespere filiam suam Liam introduxit ad eum, dans ancillam filiae, Zelpham nomine. Ad quam cum ex more Jacob fuisset ingressus, facto mane vidit Liam: et dixit ad socerum suum: Quid est quod facere voluisti? Nonne pro Rahel servivi tibi? Quare inposui mihi? Respondit Laban: Non est in loco nostro consuetidinis, ut minores ante tradamus ad nuptias. Imple ebdomadem dierum huius copulae: et hanc quoque dabo tibi pro opere quo serviturus es mihi septem annis alis. Adquievit placito: et ebdomade transacta, Rahel duxit uxorem” [And in the evening, he brought in Leah his daughter to him, giving his daughter a handmaid named Zelpha. Now when Jacob had gone in to her according to custom, in the morning, he saw it was Leah, and he said to his father-in-law: “What is it you wished to do? Did I not serve you for Rachel? Why have you deceived me?”. Laban responded: “It is not, in our place, the custom, to give the younger in marriage first. Fill the days of the week of this bond, and I will give you her as well, for another seven years which you will serve to me. He submitted to his pleasure, and when seven days were completed, he took Rachel as his wife] Genesis 29:23-28.
the individual circumstances that influence and contextualize their choices, humanizing them through the exploration of their motives, valorizing the fecundity of their marriages, and at times exercising subtle differentiation between bigamy and the remarriage of widows like Alysoun herself. Their approach, though not overtly praising the Wife’s choices, does demonstrate a predilection for underscoring where the weighty authority of Scripture agrees with her arguments and, more importantly, for narrowing readers’ field of reference and restraining the avenues through which ambiguous, conflicting interpretations proliferate.

At times, this predilection gives way to more overtly restrictive editorial manipulation. At their most extreme, the editorial changes to the glosses take the form of almost wholesale rejection of certain marginalia, and the substitution of scriptural quotation in the “Prologue”’s margins. The manuscripts’ treatment of the Pauline concept of the marriage debt—whose virtues Alysoun extols at length—offers both an illustrative demonstration of the extent to which later readers could shape the hermeneutic practices of the early Chaucerian manuscripts and a suitable place to conclude. El shares a kernel of glossed text in common with Ad1 and En3: as Alysoun observes that “An housbonde I wol have—I wol nat lette— / Which shal be bothe my dettour and my thral, / And have his tribulacion withal / Upon his flesh, whil that I am his wyf.” almost all of the glossed manuscripts note some minor variation on, “Tribulacionem tamen carnis habebunt huiusmodi” [Nevertheless, they will have tribulation of the flesh]. The remainder of the glossed text, however

233El fol. 64v; Ad1 fol. 90v; En3 fol. 83v; WBP III.154-57.
varies significantly in source and tone. El prefaces this brief passage, from 1 Corinthians, with a gloss drawn from Against Jovinian. In El, the whole marginal text for this passage reads:

 Qui vxorem habet et debitor dicitur et esse in prepucio et seruus vxoris et quod malorum seruorum est alligatus / Item si acceperis vxorem non peccasti tribulacionem tamen carnis habebunt huiusmodi et cetera / Item vir corporis sui non habet potestatem set vxor / Item viri diligite vnoxes vestras”

[He who has a wife is said to be a debtor, and to be uncircumcised, and the servant of his wife and, like bad servants, a bound slave / Likewise if you take a wife you have not sinned, but they will have tribulation of the flesh, et cetera / Also a man has no power over his own body, but his wife (does) / Also, husbands, love your wives]. 234

In El, this ambiguous context plays upon a deeply misogynist polemical twist to 1 Corinthians in Against Jovinian, in which the marriage bond is interpreted literally: the meaning of the words themselves, Jerome argues, must be taken into account, and if he who is married is a servant, a debtor, a bound slave and uncircumcised, conversely, “Qui autem sine uxor leg est, primum nullius debitor est, deinde circumcisus, tertio liber, ad extremam solutus” [But he is without a wife, first is no one’s debtor, then is circumcised, thirdly is free, lastly, is unbound]. 235 The discussion of the Pauline concept of the marriage debt is decidedly one-sided; a husband, he points out, is said to be his wife’s debtor, but Jerome says nothing of the possibility of mutuality. Rather, the woman is figured as slave-owner to an

234 El fol. 64v; WBP.155-58.

235 Against Jovinian 1.12
unclean—uncircumcised, removed from the Old Testament covenant with God—husband. Unspoken in the letter of Jerome’s text is a deeply pervasive misogynist view of femininity that corresponds closely to Alysoun’s description of her first marriages: women are domineering, liberally exerting their wills on powerless, emasculated spouses.

Jerome’s twist on Pauline marriage debt accords with that set out in the Wife of Bath’s Prologue, but the misogyny of his text is dampered, if not wholly absent, from his source in Scripture. Paul describes marriage as a mutual debt, in which just as a husband owes his wife a debt, so too does she owe her husband: “Uxori vir debitum reddat: similiter autem et uxor viro. Mulier sui corporis potestatem non habet, sed vir. Similiter autem et vir sui corporis potestatem non habet, sed mulier. Nolite fraudare invicem, nisi forte ex consensu ad tempus, ut vacetis orationi: et iterum revertimini in id ipsum” [Let the husband render the debt to his wife: likewise, let the wife render the debt to her husband. A woman does not have power over her own body, but her husband does. Likewise, however, the husband has no power over his body, but his wife does. Do not defraud one another, unless perhaps out of consensus, so that you may be free to pray: and return again to one another]. In its original Pauline expression, marriage is an equal partnership: the wife, rather than being a domineering harridan, may have power over her husband,

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236 For discussion of circumcision in the Old Testament, see: Genesis 17:11-14; Exodus 4:24-26 and 12:48; Joshua 5:2; Isaiah 52:1; Ezekiel 28:10 and 32:17-32. Here, it is frequently used as a term of reproach, as Jerome appears to do, despite the ritual’s status being more tenuous in New Testament texts.

237 1 Corinthians 7:3-5.
but he too has power over her body. The emasculating spousal subjugation of *Against Jovinian* is neatly balanced by this mutual power, such that if the husband is in fact his wife’s slave, so too is she his. El’s readers might well evaluate the “Wife of Bath’s Prologue” in relation to Jerome’s antifeminist screed—the language of the gloss, here, echoes his text—but Paul’s epistle remains at the gloss’ core, so that the reader who encounters the “Prologue” in this context might also recognize the Scriptural source and reevaluate the poem accordingly, correcting the Wife’s one-sided understanding of marriage debt, perhaps understanding the ironic misinterpretation of Scripture at play in the misogynist stereotypes to which she gives form—including those voiced in *Against Jovinian*.

In Ad1 and En3, this process of recognition and evaluation is foreshortened by the editorial changes to the gloss, which restrict its interpretive possibilities by restoring, over several lines of verse, the marginal text to its fuller Pauline context. Alysoun’s first discussion of the marital debt is folded into a defense of the procreative capabilities of the sexual organs. If genitalia were intended only for purgation, why, she asks, would anyone have written “That man shal yelde his wyf hire dette?” (III.130). Ad1 and En3 echo her one-sided understanding of marital debt, here, remarking, “Vxori vir debitum reddat Apostolus ad Corinthios” [Let the husband render the debt to his wife, the Apostle to the Corinthians].238 The gloss here, while it does preempt a Hieronymic contextualization, can only point readers toward the source that corrects Alysoun’s apparent misunderstanding of the

238 Ad1, fol. 90r; En3 fol. 83r.
marriage debt. Yet, the Wife is not finished discussing the subject, and she returns
to the subject, proclaiming that she will persevere in her sexuality, to use her
‘instrument’ whenever her husband

list come forth and paye his dette.
A housbond I wol have—I owl nat lette—
Which shal be bothe my dettour and my thral,
... I have the power durynge al my lyf
Upon his propre body, and nght he” (III.153-58).

Alysoun’s language clearly echoes Jerome’s—her husband shall be her debtor and
her slave—but the author of Ad1 and En3’s changes responds with a firmly Pauline
gloss:

Vxor vir debitum reddyat similiter autem et vxor viro Apostolus
ad Corinthios / Tribulacionem tamen carnis habebunt
Apostolus ad Corinthios / Similiter autem et vir potestatem
non habet sed mulier Apostolus ad Corinthios Viri diligite
viores vestras et nolite amari esse ad illas Apostolus ad
Colocenses”

[Let the husband render the debt to his wife, likewise however,
let the wife to her husband, the Apostle to the Corinthians /
Nevertheless they shall have tribulation of the flesh, the
Apostle to the Corinthians / Likewise, however, also a husband
has no power, but his wife does, the Apostle to the Corinthians,
Husbands, love your wives, and do not be bitter to them, the
Apostle to the Colossians].239

The text does not stray completely from El’s gloss, or Jerome’s interpretation
of Scripture; where Against Jovinian and Chaucer’s tale concur with scriptural
precedence, Ad1 and En3 reproduce the glosses in El, albeit with scriptural citation.
They firmly acknowledge the root of Alysoun’s claim that her husbands shall have

239 Ad1 fol. 90v; En3 fol. 83v.
tribulation of the flesh, and command husbands to love their wives. Yet, the marginalia’s insistence on the Pauline intertext forces something of a theological confrontation between the competing marital power dynamics, calling attention to, and correcting, the Wife’s misunderstanding of Paul’s epistle, and shepherding readers from the misogynist polemics of Jerome’s text toward an orthodox, scriptural interpretation affirming uxorial debt parallel to that which Alysoun gleefully asserts her husbands owed her.

Yet, there is a distinction to maintain. While the changes to the marginalia in Ad1 and En3 steer readers away from the antifeminist hermeneutic of Against Jovinian, it would be rash to assert a proto-feminist approach to the text at the root of these emendations. Rather, they spring from an emphasis on scriptural orthodoxy. Where Alysoun echoes misogynistic depictions of women taken from the book of Proverbs, the author of Ad1 and En3’s editorial changes adds source marginalia affirming those passages, calling attention to Scriptural sources discussing women’s gifts with weeping and lying, and alleging the essentiality of their noisome qualities.240 Inasmuch as the editorial changes to the marginal

240 For example: at III.278, the glosses read, “Tecta lugiter perstillancia mulier litigiosa . parabole Salomonis et postea tecta perstillancia inde frigorum et litigiosa mulier comperantur que retinent eam quasi qui ventum tenent ea et oleum dexter sue evocet” [Like a continuously dripping roof, is a quarrelsome wife, the parables of Solomon, and afterward, a leaking roof on cold days, and a quarrelsome wife are comparable; who keeps her is like he who would hold the in one hand, and gather oil in his right hand] (Ad1 fol. 92v; En3 fol. 85r, taken from Proverbs 19:13 and 27:15-16). At III.363, “Per tria mouetur terra et quartum quod non potest sustinere per cum regnauint per stultium cum saturatus fuerit cibo per odiosam mulierem cum in matrimonio fuerit assumpsta et per ancillam cum fuerit heres domine sue perabole Salomonis” [By three things is the earth moved, and a fourth, it cannot sustain: by when (a servant) reigns, by a fool when he is sated with food, by a hateful woman when she is taken in matrimony, and by a handmaid, when she is heir to her lady, the parables of Solomon] (Ad1 fol. 94v; En3 fol. 86r, taken from Proverbs 30:21-23). And, at III.371, “Tria sunt unsaturabilia et quartum quod numquam dicit sufficit Infernus et os vulue et terra que non saciatur
apparatus of the "Wife of Bath's Prologue" appears to assert a particular hermeneutic approach to the poem, they demonstrate a concerted and repeated investment in narrowing the field of reference enabled by the glosses, and directing readers to the specific intertext of Holy Scripture. This approach must be seen not as a response to the poem itself, but as a cognizant reaction against the ambiguous recontextualization of the apparatus witnessed in the earliest glossed *Canterbury Tales* manuscripts and established in the Ellesmere manuscript. It suggests, then, concrete evidence that, whatever the glosses' original purpose, they were received by medieval readers as an integral part of the text, one which they anticipated might be able, or expected, to offer some form of commentary on the poem itself; where the glosses failed to adequately indicate a particular, comprehensible textual meaning, the inherent malleability of medieval textual culture allowed the glosses to be shaped to a particular editor's chosen venture, leaving behind the track of a medieval reader's reaction to the physical object of the poem and its attendant paratexts.

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*aqua ignis vero numquam dicit sufficit perabole Salamonis* [There are three insatiable things, and a fourth which never says 'it is enough': Hell, and the mouth of the vulva, and land not sated by water, and flames truly never say 'it is enough', the parable of Solomon] (Ad1 fol. 94v; En3 fol. 86r, taken from Proverbs 30:15-16).
CHAPTER 4:
REWISING TROILUS AND CRISEYDE AS AMATORY HANDBOOK: THE CASE OF
HARLEY 2392

4.1 Introduction

Chapters One and Two trace the evolution and reception of the authorial
glosses to Chaucer’s poetry; in Chapters Three and Four, I will address their non-
authorial counterparts: the Latin marginalia written not by Chaucer, nor adapted
from his corpus of glosses, but composed rather by medieval readers. Both chapters
focus on the same manuscript, British Library, MS Harley 2392 (hereafter, H4),
which is a fifteenth-century copy of Chaucer’s Troilus and Criseyde preserving a set
of almost exclusively Latin annotations. Chapter Three explores the extent to which
H4 draws upon ethical models of reading and encourages readers to view the
manuscript as a moral handbook on love—what I term a Troilus moralisé—and
where an ethical approach to the manuscript falls short. Chapter Four explores
alternative interpretations of the glosses, arguing instead for their ability to enable
affective and ruminative engagement with the romance.

H4’s Latin annotations are particularly interesting, both for their abundance
and their uniformity as the work of a single hand, also responsible for the copying of
the manuscript itself. H4 is a paper and parchment manuscript, containing only
Troilus and Criseyde, which Root dates to the middle of the fifteenth century. It is copied entirely by a single scribe in a clear, neat secretary script, with annotations in the same clear hand in both the inner and outer margins of the page.241 It is occasionally attributed to the work of a scribe purportedly called “Style,”242 based on a brief colophon reading:

Colophon: Explicit liber Troili

} quod Style
Merci Dieu & grant merci

A much later reader has taken this naming to heart, and added a maniculus to the bottom, fol. 17v, with the (very faint) note, “style loke well.”243 Whatever his name, the scribe of H4 is typically recognized by scholarship on the Troilus glosses to have been a “careful and intelligent” reader of the poem, skillfully identifying the rhetorical genres of character’s speeches, marking formal divisions between the poem’s progressing narrative and its lyrical interludes, and recognizing and citing allusions to classical literary tradition.244 This attentive reading is interpreted as

241 The script’s ductus is clear and regular, showing little cursivity and giving the manuscript the appearance of a text copied carefully by an experienced scribe, and there are some influences of anglicana formata in the script, namely, the ‘d’ with looping ascender and certain instances of the ‘w’ formed also with looped ascenders. The ‘a,’ ‘g,’ ‘r,’ and final ‘s,’ however, are unmistakably secretary forms.

242 ‘Stile’ or ‘Stiles’ was a common surname; see, e.g., Derek Pearsall, ed, Piers Plowman: A New Annotated Edition of the C-Text (Exeter, University of Exeter Press, 2008), 126 n. 145.

243 British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 17v. The colophon and brief note both transcribed in Root, Manuscripts with Collotype Facsimiles, 29.

244 The two chief studies of these marginalia, both in the larger context of the production of Troilus manuscripts, and with specific respect to H4 itself, are Ardis Butterfield, “Mise-en-page in the Troilus Manuscripts: Chaucer and French Manuscript Culture,” Huntington Library Quarterly 58.1, Reading from the Margins: Textual Studies, Chaucer, and Medieval Literature (1995): 49-80, who terms the scribe “careful and intelligent” (53); and Tamara Pérez-Fernandez and Ana Sáez-Hidalgo.
exposing the scribe’s particular critical perspective, one which has much in common with reading practices in the medieval schools. According to this approach, the scribe’s demonstrable interest in and knowledge of classical mythology, and his careful identification of certain formal elements of the poem suggest a reader who was deeply invested in presenting the text as a viable subject of scholarly inquiry: in other words, an educated, likely clerical scribe “intending to provide the reader with a useful moral and amorous handbook through those glosses which are peculiar to this manuscript”—a sort of *Troilus moralisé*.

Yet this particular interpretation of the scribe’s critical practices does not entirely satisfy, particularly when one takes into consideration the larger context of his editorial choices in copying the manuscript, paying attention not only to the passages that are deemed worthy of annotation for future reading, but also those that are passed over unannotated, and in certain cases, even uncopied in the manuscript’s text of the poem itself. It is worth noting, here, the complexity of the textual history of H4. The manuscript presents a particularly intriguing example of the “layered” composition of the poem, to borrow Barry Windeatt’s terminology; in

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245 Pérez-Fernandez and Sáez-Hidalgo, “‘A Man Textueel’,” 214.

246 John Shirley notably shows a similar propensity to call attention to the mythological references in texts he copied. See, for example, Kathryn Veeman, “‘Send is Booke Ageyne Hoome to Shirley’: John Shirley and the Circulation of Manuscripts in Fifteenth-Century England.” (Ph.D. Diss, University of Notre Dame, 2010), 126-129.

Root’s estimation, it contains a composite form of the text, incorporating two recensions of *Troilus*, and preserving a somewhat less corrupt version of the poem than its closest textual neighbor, British Library MS Harley 3943 (H2). In Ralph Hanna’s estimation, this mixed form of the text results from errors in multiple levels of transmission in the text of H4 and its related manuscripts J and R. The

248 Root, *Chaucer’s Troilus*, lvi-lvii; Barry Windeatt, “The Text of the Troilus,” in *Essays on Troilus and Criseyde*, edited by Mary Salu, 1-22. Chaucer Studies III (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1979). Root specifies the nature of this textual composite thus: “H4 presents a composite text, which in certain parts of the work is also ‘mixed.’ In Book I it is definitely an alpha manuscript. ... In Book II it is a mixture of alpha and beta, with the alpha element decreasing in importance as the book proceeds. ... In Book III it becomes distinctively a beta manuscript, and so continues to the end, sharing in virtually all the beta readings of Book III, and avoiding the many alpha readings of Book IV.” Root’s history of the poem’s transmission has, however, been dramatically reworked by later scholars, who question both the grounds on which it is based and his resultant conclusion that the poem was composed in at least three stages—designated alpha, beta, and gamma, in what winds up being a chronology of somewhat rolling revision, with the earliest (alpha) manuscripts stemming from an authorial fair copy that was revised somewhat continuously into the beta text; the gamma manuscripts are a genealogical family of texts that split off at some point between the alpha and beta stages of composition. F.N. Robinson offers an early objection to Root’s assertion that the beta manuscripts represented the final, more revised—and thus, more authoritative—version of the poem, though he does accept the textual division of the manuscripts into an earlier group and at least two other groups among the remaining manuscripts. Derek Brewer observes that Root’s argument becomes largely circular, with the preference given to particular readings based on assumptions of higher authoritative status for the given manuscripts, which are then reinforced by the presence of those “authentic” readings. Barry Windeatt argues emphatically against the existence of an earlier text, marked by a number of omitted passages which Root sees as evidence for this phase of textual completion and a more Italianate vocabulary that more closely reflected Chaucer’s initial, unrevised translation of the Boccaccian original texts. The evidence for such a reading, Windeatt declares, does not exist. Ralph Hanna III, further, argues that the beta texts, which represent a minority of the poem’s manuscripts, were particularly susceptible to a great deal of variation due to the “strange vicissitudes of book-production.” (174). For additional discussion of the poem’s complicated textual transmission, see Derek Brewer, “Root’s Account of the Text of Troilus,” *Poetica* 12 (1979): 36-44; Ralph Hanna III, “The Manuscripts and Transmission of Chaucer’s Troilus,” in *The Idea of Medieval Literature: New Essays on Chaucer and Medieval Culture in Honor of Donald R. Howard,* edited by James M. Dean and Christian K. Zacher, 173-88 (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1992); F.N. Robinson, ed., *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957).

249 Hanna, “Manuscripts and Transmissions,” 179-180, 182. Hanna terms H4 a “thorough mess, with at least one ancestral layering produced by simultaneous comparison and copying from two manuscripts of different textual affiliations.” The “lost first generation copy” of the text, an exemplar two generations back from J, R, and H4, diverges from the text partway through Book IV—possibly due to some form of damage to the beginning of quire 5 but more likely because the scribe of
complicated textual makeup of H4 tends to make scholars of the manuscript more inclined, though the attribution is far from absolute, to accept the glosses in H4 as the work of its scribe, rather than the borrowed apparatus of a now-lost exemplar—or, at the least, the glosses are unlikely to date any earlier than the composite form of the text witnessed in H4. Its annotations are, for example, not found in H2; indeed, they are rarely witnessed in other manuscripts in general, and where they are shared, they are as likely a product of coincidental overlap in multiple scribe’s very common glossing practices than an indication of influence, and the texts of these manuscripts are not of the same family as H4. It is, likewise, not necessarily the individual choice of H4’s scribe to copy the text of the poem as he does, in particular, where certain passages of the poem are omitted. For my purposes, this lost first-generation exemplar was handed a manuscript with lose quires—with further divergence occurring in each individual manuscript’s exemplars.

As Pérez-Fernandez and Sáez-Hidalgo explain, “In spite of Seymour’s belief that they could have been drawn from a previous set of glosses, no proof of it has been found so far. Although some glosses concur with those in other texts, some problems related to the textual tradition arise: coincident notes happen to belong to manuscripts that do not belong to H4’s textual family, whereas there is not a regular pattern linking H4 glosses with those in R or Ph, the textual siblings of this manuscript. Nor even the fact that they tend to come in bunches helps us to find a neat relation with any other extant text or filiation.” Pérez-Fernandez and Sáez-Hidalgo, “‘A Man Textueel!’, 215. R, indeed, is a close textual relative of the beta readings found in H4, but it does not witness significant variant readings found in H4 and demonstrated in early alpha manuscripts of the poem. H4’s relation to Ph is somewhat more tenuous. In any case, the vast majority of the annotations in the manuscript, particularly those relevant to this study, are not found in any of the other glossed manuscripts of the Troilus.

In particular, Root observes that the omission of the three Teseide stanzas from Book V, a reading also demonstrated in H2, are surprising, not only because of the stanzas’ role in the culmination of Troilus’ personal narrative and the poem’s climax, but also because “a contaminated text” like H4 “ordinarily incorporates lines found in any of its constituent authorities” like the exemplar that provided the rest of H4’s reading of Book V. A similar omission, of the Boethian soliloquy on free will and divine Providence, an omission that is not found in H2 but is shared by British Library MS Harley 1239 (H3) and Cambridge University Library Gg. 4.27, neither of which is textually closely related to H4. Windeatt notes, as well, that omissions generally taken to indicate the existence of an earlier version of the poem, including both of the omissions in H4, are associated with
however, it is enough to note the passages’ omission in the larger context of the
construction of a particular reading of the poem and address their impact upon the
manuscript’s potential creation of moral art of love, even if they cannot be adduced
to the deliberate editorial program which generated the many marginal glosses in
H4. Indeed, in the end, whether inherited, either wholesale from an exemplar
whose scribe made the editorial decisions demonstrated in H4 or piecemeal from a
number of exemplars as the coincidental conglomeration of a number of changes of
potentially varying degrees of deliberateness, the text-and-gloss nexus of H4 with
which future readers—the same undefined audience for whom the rewriting of the
poem as a sort of *Troilus moralisé* is theoretically intended—presents a text that
does not hold to the careful scripting of *Troilus* as a moral amatory handbook,
particularly of the sort that would warrant reading in medieval schools where,
presumably, the poem’s Boethian inflection would have been of great interest. In
this chapter, I examine the H4 glosses at both the micro- and macro-levels, and
contextualize them alongside readers’ notes in two further *Troilus* manuscripts.
This manuscript, I contend, represents not the trace of a scholasticizing, didactic

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a group of manuscripts, here termed the “Ph etc MSS” to which H4 does not belong. Windeatt
argues—and rightly so—that these omissions need not necessarily imply that there ever existed an
earlier version of the poem without the stanzas, which were later added in subsequent authorial
revisions. Indeed, he adduces internal textual evidence demonstrating that their existence is still
assumed and implied by the still-extant verse following the omitted passages. He suggests, instead,
that these passages may have been added later in the poem’s composition, yes, inserted into the
narrative in some fashion from an added sheet, or added separately, as they are in Ph, but not at a
point after which the poem had been publicly circulated, or was considered “authentically
completed” without the passages in question. H4 omits, as well, the summary of Statius’ *Thebaid,*
usually inserted into Book V, also omitted from R, a manuscript closely related to H4. Hanna, as
discussed above, attributes this to scribal error, likely due to the unbound nature of the exemplars
from which H4 is descended, though these exemplars themselves do not survive. Windeatt, “The Text
of the *Troilus*,” 5-11; Hanna, “Manuscripts and Transmission,” 182.
reader, but rather the evidence of readers practicing affective literacies, a secular counterpart to the devotional works of affective piety that ask readers to engage in imaginative identification with sacred history as a means of internalizing these feelings and inspiring devout prayer. Such affective reading practices, Chapter Four argues, formed a particular source of interest for the scribe of Harley 2392 and are illustrated in and enabled by the glosses witnessed throughout the manuscript. In advancing this theory, my argument rests upon a reading of the glosses themselves, theories of emotion and cognition both medieval and modern, and brief comparison with meta-literary depictions of emotional readers in medieval poetry.

4.2 The Art of Love, The Medieval Schools, and Troilus

The medieval scholastic reception of Ovid’s poetry offers us a popular example of what a “moral amatory handbook” might be expected to look like, and as such, provides a compelling point of comparison with the editorial and commentary program at work in H4. In the Middle Ages, Ovid’s poetry emerged as a canonical part of the medieval grammar curriculum, a move that necessitated recasting the pagan verse into a text that offered medieval schoolboys a useful lesson in Christian morality. Ovid’s racier works, the Ars amatoria, Amores, and even the Heroides, were woven together with the Remedia amoris and the Metamorphoses in a narrative of authorial error, regret, and reconciliation, in which the poet attempted to redeem
himself from the sin of writing the Ars and leading people astray. Medieval commentators deemed the poet’s exile and his composition of the Remedia, in which he attempted to offer a counterpart and antidote to the practices preached in the Ars and teach young men and women how to extricate themselves from unlawful love affairs, fitting punishment for the immorality of the first poem; the Heroides were termed a series of exempla illustrating how to act—or how not to act—in love. Scholastic commentaries proclaimed Ovid a magister amoris: his subject (materia) was illicit love, his intention (intentio) to praise moral lovers and condemn the unchaste and foolish, and its ultimate end (causa finalis) the teaching of moral amatory behavior derived from its utility (utilitas): the demonstration of both the


benefits of loving rightly and the consequences and misfortunes facing those who love wrongly.\textsuperscript{254}

Later adaptations of the genre of the \textit{ars amatoris} direct this behavior to appropriate ends. Translations and adaptations of Ovid took many forms: recasting the \textit{Metamorphoses} in various moralized Ovids and allegorizing commentaries valorizing Christian virtues.\textsuperscript{255} Other adaptations guided the would-be lover into

\textsuperscript{254} Minnis, \textit{Magister Amoris}, 38. The collection of \textit{accessus} edited by Elliott in "\textit{Accessus ad auctores}" offers a useful representation of the various ways in which the usefulness and participation in the field of ethics was adduced to Ovid's works: Arnulf of Orléans identifies the poet's intention in the \textit{Metamorphoses} as "de mutatione dicere, ut non intelligamus de mutacione que fit extrinsecus tantum in rebus corporeis bonis vel malis sed etiam de mutacione que fit intrinsecus ut in anima, ut reducat nos ab errore ad cognitionem veri creatoris." (14). The \textit{Heroides} pertain to literature because "morum instructoria est et extirpatrix malorum" (18) and in another \textit{accessus}, Ovid "bonorum morum est instructor, malorum vero extirpator" (20) and in each case, the work's intention to discourage illicit love: "Intentio huius operis est reprehendere masculos et feminas stulto et illicito amore detentos" (18) and "intentio sua est legitimum commendare conubium vel amorem, et secundum hoc triplici modo tractat de ipso amore, scilicet de legitimo, de illicito et stulto..." (20). A third, more extensive commentary on the \textit{Heroides} identifies multiple purposes and utilities for the work: "Intentio eius est de triplici genere amoris, stulti, incesti, furiors scribere, ... Aliter, intentio huius libri est commendare castum amorem sub specie quaurundam heroydum, ... Aliter, intentio sua est quasdam ex illis committentibus epistolae laudare de castitate sua, quasdam autem reprehendendre de incesto amore. Aliter, intentio sua est, cum in preceptis de arte amatoria non ostendit quo modo aliquis per epistolae sollicitaretur, illud hic exequitur. Aliter, intentio sua est in hoc libro hortari ad virtutes et redarguere vicia.... Utilitas vel finalis causa secundum intentione diversificantur, vel illicitorum vel stultorum amorum cognitio vel quomodo aliquae per epistolae sollicitentur vel quomodo per effectus ipsius castitatis commodum consequamur. Vel finalis causa est ut per comminationem caste amantium ad castos amores nos invitet vel ut visa utilitate quae ex legitimo amore procedit visisque infortunios vel incommoditibus quae ex illicito et stulto amore proveniunt, et stultum et illicitum repellamus et fugiassmus et legitimo adheamamus. Ethicae subponitur, quia de iusto amore instruit. (22-24). The \textit{Ars amatoria} pertains to ethics because "de moribus puellarum loquitur, id est quos mores habeant, quibus modis retineri valeant" (28), while the \textit{accessus} to the \textit{Remedia} reiterates its penitential purpose in atoning for Ovid's earlier poetry, observing, "intentio sua est dare precepta quaedam, quibus illicitum amorem removet, causa est ut illicito amore detenti expediantur et nondum capti sciant sibi precavar ne capiantur." (30). Further examples can be found in Coulson, "Unedited Lives," 172-207. See, as well, detailed discussion of various lives of Ovid in \textit{accessus} and other forms in Ghisalberti, "Mediaeval Biographies," 10-59.

\textsuperscript{255} Thus, an allegorical reading of the \textit{Metamorphoses} might valorize the Christian virtue of virginity, proclaiming, as Arnulf of Orléans' commentary, whose approach is "quite typical" of the medieval commentary on Ovid in the medieval schools, does in explicating the myth of Io's transformation into a cow: "Io was the daughter of some river god Inachus. . . . She was beloved by Jupiter, that is by God the Creator, because she was a virgin. For God loves virgins, since they raise themselves to him by preserving their virginity. After she was deflowered, she was withdrawn from
upstanding amatory behavior by teaching not only seduction, but also the ways in which to keep a lover and extend love, in the institution of marriage. Andreas Capellanus’ assumption of the art of love genre in his On Courtly Love guides the presumptive audience, the young scholar Walter, who is considering entering the service of love, through two books of careful instruction on how one woos a lover, including illustrative dialogues between men and women of various classes, then through a careful elaboration of those who are—and aren’t—fit for love’s service, before concluding with a book urging young Walter to abstain from love entirely, so as to devote himself to God:

If you wish to practice the system, you will obtain, as a careful reading of this little book will show you, all the delights of the flesh in the fullest measure; but the grace of God, the companionship of the good, and the friendship of praiseworthy men you will with good reason be deprived of, and you will do great harm to your good name, and it will be difficult for you to obtain the honors of this world. ... If you will study carefully this little treatise of ours and understand it completely and practice what it teaches, you will see clearly that no man ought to mis-spend his days in the pleasures of love. If you abstain from it, the Heavenly King will be more favorably disposed

the number of the virgins and changed into a cow, that is made bestial. She was turned over to Juno, that is the lower atmosphere, in other words, more serious sins. To Argus, that is to the world, that is to the gravest sins and dangers. In Argus’ multiple eyes we can understand the world, or the secular sphere ensnared with multiple lures. This world so imprisoned her that she could not recognize God her creator. But Mercury killed Argus. In Mercury, the god of eloquence, we have some eloquent man who, by the means of his persuasion, mortified worldly desires. She, I say, he raised her, than whom no one was ever better, to serve her creator, on which account it is feigned she was changed from a cow into a goddess.” Hexter, ‘Medieval Articulations of Ovid’s Metamorphoses,” 65 and 75-76. J. Engles, “L’édition critique de l'Ovidius moralizatus” Vivarium 9 (1971): 19-24; and “Ovidius moralizatus, cap. ii” Vivarium 9 (1971): 25-48. For a brief introduction to Bersuire, see M-H. Tesnière, “Pierre de Bersuire” in Dictionnaire des lettres Francaises: le Moyen Âge, edited by Geneviève Hasenohr and Michel Zink (Paris: Fayard, 1992), 1161-2. There is an English translation: William Donald Reynolds, “The Ovidius Moralizatus” of Petrus Berchorius: An Introduction and Translation” (Ph. D. diss. University of Illinois, Urbana -Champaign, 1971).

256 Minnis, Magister Amoris, 35-62.
toward you in every respect, and you will be worthy to have all prosperous success in this world and to fulfill all praiseworthy deeds and the honorable desires of your heart, and in the world to come to have glory and life everlasting. Therefore, Walter, accept this health-giving teaching we offer you, and pass by all the vanities of the world, so that when the Bridegroom cometh to celebrate the greater nuptials, and the cry ariseth in the night, you may be prepared to go forth to meet Him with your lamps filled and to go in with him to the divine marriage.  

The work’s intention, as Capellanus expresses it, is not to teach the proper, moral practice of the amatory arts, but to arm Walter with the appropriate knowledge by which he may make the correct choice to abstain from worldly love and turn his thoughts and desires towards God.  

These commentaries offer multiple points from which to begin to understand how poetry—particularly objectionable poetry, whether pagan or scandalously erotic—could be shaped into an exercise in the philosophy of ethics. The Disce mori, a fifteenth-century treatise surviving in two manuscripts now housed in Oxford, offers us an example of just this sort of exercise, in which Troilus and Criseyde itself is marshaled in support of a treatise condemning fleshly love while affirming its spiritual counterpart. The text is a five-part treatise incorporating typical catechetical material on the sins, the nature of divine grace, penance, visions, and a

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\textsuperscript{258} Capellanus, Courtly Love, 187.
meditative exposition on the *Pater Noster*, concluding with an “‘exhortation to the persone that hit was written to.’”

Troilus joins the text here:

Chapter 17 of the Exhortation opens by discussing obstructions that hinder the full enjoyment of the contemplative life and then turns to an account of how "fleshy love" (amor) undermines "love spiritual" (amicitia). The burden of this discussion is to define seven tokens by which the two loves can be distinguished. It is at the beginning of this account that the stanza from Troilus and Criseyde is quoted and at the end the interested reader is referred to the poem itself.

The stanza in question is the Petrarchan stanza identified as the first “Canticus Troili”:

If no love is O god what fele I so  
And if love is what thinge and whiche is he  
If love be goode from whens cometh my woo  
If it be wikke a wonder it thenketh me  
Sith every torment and adversite  
That from it cometh may me savoury thenke  
For ay thurst I the more that I it drynke (1.400-406).

Its larger context in the *Disce mori*—the discussion of the seven signs of love by David of Augsbourg—is further bolstered by excerpts from Walter Hilton’s *Eight Chapters of Perfection* and Aelred of Rievaulx’s *The Chastising of God’s Children*.

The treatise, Patterson claims, was likely compiled and copied at Syon, a fifteenth-century

259 *Disce mori*, quoted in Lee Patterson, “Ambiguity and Interpretation: A Fifteenth-Century Reading of *Troilus and Criseyde*,” *Speculum* 54 (1979): 297-330; at 299. Patterson’s account of the text provides, as well, an *editio princeps* for the *Disce mori*’s discussion of fleshy and spiritual love.

260 Patterson, “Ambiguity and Interpretation,” 299. Patterson’s account of the text provides, as well, an *editio princeps* for the *Disce mori*’s discussion of fleshy and spiritual love.

261 See also Patterson, “Ambiguity and Interpretation,” 304.

262 Patterson, “Ambiguity and Interpretation,” 321.
century monastery founded by the Brigittine order, whose population, as a mixed community of men and women, would have been a particularly relevant group of addressees for a text warning against the dangers of *amor*. In this particular context, the insertion of *Troilus*, albeit as an excerpt of a single stanza, and an instruction that readers who wish to read more “Seeth the storie of Troilus, Creseide and Dyomede,” suggests a reading in which the poem—or at least, its predominating concern with romantic and fleshly love—is seen as appropriate reading for a nun who may not, herself, engage in the activities of its protagonists. Patterson’s suggestion is that the compiler of the *Disce mori* saw it as a sort of spiritual reading itself, in which, though eschewing obviously spiritual material like the lives of Christian saints, the text may teach morals because it “does aim to distinguish true from false, good from evil, vice from virtue” and can, “placed in this severely moralistic context ... provide moral discriminations that are at least comparable to those drawn by David of Augsburg.”

Though H4 does not present *Troilus* in the fractional, deeply contextualized manner of the *Disce mori*, the treatise’s treatment of the poem—along with the patterns of response to classical erotic poetry elaborated above—ought to offer us some idea of what we should expect to see in a marginal rendering of the poem as a moral handbook for its readers, treating the topic of human love. We might expect the scribe to draw reader’s attention to exempla of good lovers, and to the

263 Patterson, “Ambiguity and Interpretation,” 307.

264 Patterson, “Ambiguity and Interpretation,” 322-23.
misfortunes suffered by the unchaste, as medieval scholastic commentators on Ovid did; we might expect him to call readers to divert their attention away from the sort of love that led to Troilus’ “double sorwe,” and exhort them instead to devote themselves to God, the way that Andreas Capellanus and the compiler of the Disce mori urge their respective audiences to do. Certainly, there are moments in the Troilus that are more than ripe for this sort of critical underscoring: the end of the poem, in fact, calls upon its audience to do exactly that: to reflect upon Troilus’ tragedy and direct their attention instead to loving God:

O yonge, fresshe folkes, he or she
In which ay love up groweth in your age,
Repeireth hem from worldly vanite,
And of your herte up castith the visage
To that God that aftir his ymage
You made, and thynketh al is but a faire,
This world that passith soone as floures faire.

And lovyth him which that riht for love
Upon a cros, our soules for to bie,
First starf, and ros, and sittith in hevene above;
For he nil falsen him dar I seye [leie],
That wil his herte al holy on him leie.
And sithe he best is to love, and most meek,
What nedith feyned loves for to seke?265

Chaucer himself, then, appears more than willing to provide the raw materials for readers to understand the poem as an exemplum of the dangers of human love, and to suggest a morally, spiritually acceptable alternative. The question at stake in reading the annotations in Harley 2392 as a “moral, amatory handbook” is, to what

extent does the manuscript’s scribe capitalize on, or even demonstrate interest in, these passages?

4.3 Harley 2392: The Troilus Moralisé?

With this contextual framework in place, we can begin to explore H4’s vested interest (or lack thereof) in enabling ethical interpretations of Troilus. To assess the H4 marginalia’s ethical dynamic, it is first necessary to begin with a discussion of the content of the glosses themselves. The annotations in H4 can be divided broadly into three groups. The first is a series of rhetorical markers (Grindley’s III-NRA-RD) which identify stylistic features of speeches in the poem. These are the first of the two sets of glosses with which Pérez-Fernandez and Sáez-Hidalgo are particularly concerned, leading them to identify the scribe’s concern with the poem’s stylistic features, and his interest in construing the text as the worthy object of literary study. These rhetorical markers include divisions of the text into its constituent narrative and lyric passages, by labeling the lyric interludes with the appropriate textual subtitle—as “Canticus Troili,” “Littera Troili,” and so on. This practice of marking such divisions in commonplace in the Troilus manuscripts, with most of them employing rubrics, marginal annotations, or in some cases, even litterae notabiliores to signal visually the change in the text’s formal features, yet H4 presents a particularly well-developed example of this mise-en-page schema,

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marking both incipits and explicitsto the lyric divisions, in “the same formal terminology” used to mark the major divisions between the five books of the poem. These rhetorical divisions in the text are complemented by the second type of marginalia grouped broadly together under the rubric of III-NRA-RD marginalia, which identify the rhetorical genres of certain speeches in the poem, identifying for example: “oration,” “oration,” “lamentatio,” “monicio,” and so on. These glosses represent, however, only a small portion of the marginalia in the poem; much more frequent are glosses from two other subtypes: Grindley’s III-NRA-S and –C groups, concerning the citation and quotation of source material in a text’s margins, and various notae that function somewhere under the rubric of ethical pointer and polemic response to the text. They often highlight sententiae from

267 Butterfield, “Mise-en-page in the Troilus Manuscripts,” 59-61. Butterfield characterizes H4’s approach to the poem as “particularly interested in marking out the boundaries of the poem’s set pieces” (59), a claim that is in keeping with the suggestion that his copying of the poem is girded by a particular interest in the highlighting the poem’s literary features in order to present it as the subject of serious scholarly inquiry—though this need not be his only goal. The scribe of H4 appears to prefer to add these markers to the text’s margins, in the same hand and ink as the rest of his annotations. Interestingly, however, (at least) one of the major rhetorical divisions in the poem—between the narrative and its first lyric interlude, the Petrarchan “Canticus Troili,” here beginning at fol. 8r, line 8, remains unmarked, either marginally or by a rubric, with the exception of a gloss noting the name of Chaucer’s auctor: “Lolkius auctor / huius libri” British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 8r, lines 2-3.

268 See Pérez-Fernandez and Sáez-Hidalgo, “A Man Textueel,” 212-14. Pérez-Fernandez and Sáez-Hidalgo take the presence of these glosses, which they discuss under the heading of “discourse markers” as proof of the scribe’s interest in rhetorical practice, suggesting that they may, in fact, even be marked out for future consultation as model speeches in a particular genre—a move that would re-inscribe Troilus as not only a moral handbook on love, but a handbook of rhetoric, as well.

269 These source quotations and citations come largely from mythological material, and are cited by most studies of the glosses as indicating the scribe’s undeniable literary erudition and his interest in the literary dimensions of the poem. See, for example, Pérez-Fernandez and Sáez-Hidalgo, “A Man Textueel,” 205-211. Pérez-Fernandez and Sáez-Hidalgo discuss both these source quotations and notae, but only briefly, glossing over their content where it does not fit the schema of the particular moral reading which they envision emerging from the manuscript’s mise-en-page. A marginal “nota bene,” for example—a gloss that is itself rarely used by the scribe, who more
classical—and in very rare cases, scriptural—*auctoritas*, and have been interpreted as contributing to the overall impression of a manuscript that is deeply invested in creating a text to direct future readers to behave ethically in love.270

Yet this interpretation becomes difficult to support as one reads further and further into the truly sprawling body of annotations that makes up the marginal apparatus in H4. It is borne out in selective reading of individual glosses but becomes unsustainable as part of a deeper investigation of the manuscript’s *mise-en-page*—particularly with regard to the passages that the scribe glosses, along with their function within the narrative, to the patterns of concentration of the glosses throughout the manuscripts, and the curious omissions in the scribe’s glossing schemata. I would like to begin here, by addressing more cursorily the question of the scribe’s interest in identifying the formal literary features of the poem, with a particular eye towards marking passages to be used as models for rhetorical study, before turning to the larger issue of the poem’s function as an *ars amatoria*.

The rhetorical markers that form the basis of this argument—as well as those that resemble these glosses in form, though their function may be less clear—consist in the following annotations:271

commonly encourages audiences simply to “nota,” or gives some additional information on what precisely they ought to be noting—is regarded as solely calling attention to the beautiful language of the monologue; any scribal interest in the passage’s content rather than its form is summarily dismissed thus: “the monologue seems to be singled out by the scribe for its literary merits rather than for its moral values” (210). While their conclusions are generally very persuasive for the glosses they address, in the case of this particular *nota*—and the scribe’s over-arching motivations—these conclusions are less conclusively borne out by a more holistic look at the manuscript’s annotations; the interest in this passage and the poem itself is likely deeper, and more subtly complicated than mere formalism and didacticism.

270 Pérez-Fernandez and Sáez-Hidalgo, “‘A Man Textueel’,” 210-212.
271 I continue to term these rhetorical markers, operating under the terminology and classificatory system under which they are typically discussed, though, as I argue, their function is more complicated than previously estimated.
They present, admittedly, a somewhat confusing assembly of annotations, amongst which it is difficult to discern a unifying concern. We might simplify things somewhat by removing from consideration glosses that appear to fulfill another, clearer purpose, as in the case of glosses that appear to take this form, but seem designed rather to offer brief summaries of the plot or those that merely identify speakers without commenting at all on the quality of a given speech. With perhaps more difficulty, we might remove, as well, those glosses that appear to call attention to content rather than form of a passage—the intention here is, after all, to address those glosses that suggest a formalist critical perspective and might be intended to mark model exercises in rhetoric.

This leaves us with a still rather significant, and varied, list of rhetorical glosses, giving us a basis for comparison with rhetorical handbooks. The basis of an interpretation of these annotations as rhetorical markers rests on the assertion that they rely upon the sorts of terminology applied to not only formal analysis of poetry, but also the teaching of rhetoric.  

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272 Pérez-Fernandez and Sáez-Hidalgo, the proponents of this interpretation, cite Suzanne Reynold’s work on the presentation of auctoritas in manuscript annotations in support of such a reading of H4: “Some other marginal notes use words that designated rhetorical genres in the Middle Ages such as ‘lamentatio’, ‘exemplum’, ‘narratio’, ‘oratio’, ‘monicio’ or ‘peticio’; this usage of marginal annotation was habitual in school texts and handbooks from the twelfth century (Reynolds 2000).” “‘A Man Textueel’,” (212). We might further qualify this; the practice is not merely habitual rote recognition of textual genre, according to the text Pérez-Fernandez and Sáez-Hidalgo cite, “Inventing Authority: Glossing Literacy, and the Classical Text.” Reynolds addresses, rather, the various methods by which marginalia in a very specific subset of texts—in this case, the classical Latin texts by pagan authors used to teach Latin in the medieval schools—could codify those texts’ authority in the face of anxiety about their potential to corrupt young Christian school children. These glosses that Reynolds discusses take multiple forms, ranging from simple explanations of confusing grammar and mapping of subject-verb-object word order onto particularly complicated syntax, to more complicated expositions on the text’s role in a Christian curriculum. Reynolds does offer one example of marginalia somewhat similar to those found in H4: “some glosses working at a more advanced level
demonstrate knowledge of the vocabulary and principles explicated in classical and medieval treatises on rhetoric and poetry. One gloss, for example, marks a particular speech as an example of epideictic rhetoric, noting Pandarus’ intention to praise the subject of his speech (III.184). Others identify parts of rhetorical speeches: two exempla (III.857 and III.1191); a narracio (II.316)—itself a vague designation, but one that does encompass the tale of dubious veracity which Pandarus spins for his niece, explaining how Troilus confessed his love to his friend.

The legalistic language of the glosses marking the scenes in which first Calchas and then the Greek ambassadors present their petitions to exchange Antenor for Criseyde, along with Troilus’ petition to Cupid in Book V, might reflect the treatises’ adopt a distinctly rhetorical emphasis when looking at a passage and use terms which we also find in contemporary *artes poetriae* to describe Horace’s use of the trope ‘prosopopeia’ or personification, which appears to be more like the practices illustrated in H4. Suzanne Reynolds, “Inventing Authority: Glossing Literacy, and the Classical Text,” in *Prestige, Authority and Power in Late Medieval Manuscripts and Texts*, edited by Felicia Riddy, 7-16 (York: York Medieval Press, 2000), at 12. The full scope of the rhetorical vocabulary here is not, however, defined, and its relevance to H4 is difficult to determine without extensive further reference to rhetorical handbooks themselves, of the sort that H4’s scribe is purportedly imitating.

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274 British Library MS Harley 2392, fols. 67r. and 73r.

275 British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 26r.
discussion of forensic rhetoric, the branch of rhetoric occupying the vast majority of each of the treatises’ focus.276

Yet this small body of glosses represents a rather superficial venture into reading the *Troilus* as an exercise in rhetoric, passing in silence over the discussions of ornamentation style that mark a significant part of these treatises, and one of the most obviously relevant to an explication of the formal elements of a poem like *Troilus*.277 Suzanne Reynolds characterizes this particular type of gloss as a characteristic of more advanced literary glossing found in some copies of classical Latin poetry taught in the medieval schoolroom. She offers an example from a manuscript of Horace’s *Satires*, here discussing the use of prosopopeia in a passage concerning the god Priapus:

prosopopeia utitur, idest conformatione nove persone. hic reprehendit veneficas que nullo modo a veneficiis suis removeri possunt, et introducit imaginem Priapi dei ortorum, referentem qualiter prius facta (read: factus) fuerit et qualiter in orto ubi fuerit et qualiter in orto ubi pauperes prius sepeliebantur, veneficas terruerit.278

[He uses prosopopeia, that is in the shape on a new person. Here he reprehends witches who can in no way be removed from their sorceries, and introduces the image of Priapus, god of the gardens, relating how he was first made and how in the

276 Cicero defines petition as one of the key components of forensic oratory: “iudiciale, quod positum in iudicio habet in se accusationem et defensionem aut petitionem et recusationem” (emphasis mine). *De inventione*, I.5.7.

277 The most extensive discussion and list of these tropes and figures is in Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, VIII.1-IX.3. See also *Rhetorica ad Herenium*. Edited by F. Marx. Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1993; Book IV and Cicero, *De oratore*. Edited by A.S. Wilkins. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1902; at III.xxvi-liii, especially III.liii.206-08.

278 From Cambridge, Peterhouse, MS 229, quoted in Reynolds, “Inventing Authority,” 13.
garden where he was and how in the garden where the poor were first buried, he frightened the witches.]

Though this sort of gloss, which identifies the rhetorical figure/trope the poet has used and explains how it has been deployed and how it should be interpreted, is more complicated than the style of rhetorical glossing seen in H4, it nevertheless demonstrates the kind of specific stylistic interest that a formalist analysis of medieval poetry might generate. Quintilian, Cicero, and the Pseudo-Ciceronian *Rhetorica ad Herenium* devote chapters of rhetorical treatises to these details of style, while Conrad of Hirsau's *Dialogus super auctores* includes a brief list of the terminology the student must know to read literary school texts critically. These lists were at times extremely detailed, covering varying stylistic topics from clarity of diction to use of figurative language—metaphor, metonymy—and linguistic ornamentation like alliteration and anaphora.

Let us return here, briefly, to the gloss at Calchas' speech before the Greeks in Book IV, as he requests his daughter in trade with Antenor. This particular speech, glossed at its beginning with “peticio Calcasii in consistorio,” is singled out by Pérez-Fernandez and Sáez-Hidalgo as an example of H4's scribe highlighting "not only ... the rhetorical discourse, but also its technical and literary features," leading them to assert that it is “not improbable that he might be singling it out as a model for that type of speech.”

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280 Pérez-Fernandez and Sáez-Hidalgo, “‘A Man Textueel’,” 213.
sterling example of rhetoric, as other scholars have pointed out—as the text announces that the erstwhile Trojan, upon learning that the Greeks were soon to hold negotiations with Troy, came before the council and “with a chaunged face hem bad a Boone.” Yet none of the remainder of the speech’s constituent parts, or rhetorical figures, receives attention: the scribe for example, might have noted that the speech’s beginning drawn from the speaker’s own person, as the introduction in an epideictic or deliberative speech should be; or called readers’ attention to the use frequent use of rhetorical questions; he does none of these things. At IV.103, Calchas apostrophizes a council of Greeks represented metonymically by their faculties of “help and grace” to which he directs his petition. When suggesting that Criseyde be sought in exchange for a Trojan prisoner of war, Calchas embarks upon a sustained use of antithesis and hyperbole: he has but one daughter, and they, so many Trojan prisoners. Yet these features are receive no marginal emphasis. Calchas concludes his speech with a reminder that the Gods themselves support the Greeks’ cause. They will win, and one Trojan prisoner returned to the city in order to rescue Criseyde will be no sacrifice at all, as:

\begin{verbatim}
For certein, Phebus and Neptunus bothe,
That makeden the walles of the town,
Ben with the folk of Troie alwey so wrothe,
That they wol brynge it to confusioun,
Right in despit of kyng Laneadoun:
By-cause he nolde payen hem here hire,
The town of Troie shal ben set on fire. (IV120-126)
\end{verbatim}

Here, at last, the speech receives one further annotation, though not to identify the

\begin{footnote}
281 British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 85v.; IV.68.
\end{footnote}
features of the rhetorical fabric of Calchas’ speech: it merely clarifies the reference to Laomedon, observing that he is “Lamedon/pater priami” in the left margin, and the “causa destrictio civitatis Troianorum” in the right.\footnote{282 British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 86v; IV.124.}

This curious absence of any further scribal critical interest in the formal elements of the speech is reflected in a sustained lack of glossing of the more overtly rhetorical passages in the remainder of the poem. Chaucer’s invocations of the muses and of pagan deities are occasionally glossed with explanations of the individual being addressed, but not with any identification of the extensive use of apostrophe they represent, nor are other uses of the figure, appearing to represent intrusions of the narratorial voice to elaborate upon a particular point in the tale, which are occasionally glossed in other manuscripts of Troilus with the word “auctor.”\footnote{283 See, for example, British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 20v. Chaucer’s invocation of Cleo is glossed, “Cleo domina eloquentie” at II.8. On fol. 52r, (III.15), the gloss “primus dea amoris” clarifies a confusingly-phrased mythological narrative in the address to Venus: “Ye Joves first to thilke effectes glade, / Thorugh which that thynges lyven alle and be, / Comeveden, and amorous him made / On mortal thyng ..” (III.15-18). Gloses on the apostrophaic narratorial intrusions occur in R and S1, primarily, as well as in multiple manuscripts of The Canterbury Tales.} The sole exception to what appears to be scribal apathy regarding the poem’s rhetorical texture can be found in Book V, and the curious insertion of three descriptions of Diomede, Criseyde, and Troilus. In H4, two of these—those of the poem’s protagonists—are glossed with the assertion that here, Chaucer has provided readers with the characters’ descriptions, the “condiciones .c.” at V.820, and the “condiciones troili” at V.827.\footnote{284 This is a passage with a rather complex history of annotations; along with these glosses in H4, and similar, English glosses in R and S2, the passage appears with Latin quotations from Joseph}
glosses like these in H4 (particularly with respect to the sheer number of marginalia in the entire manuscript), combined with the scribe's apparent complete uninterest in the rhetorical tropes of figures that ornament the language of Calchas' speech—and the majority of Chaucer's poem, as well—suggests that leading readers to a careful formal analysis of the poem was not one of the scribe's priorities. Indeed, on the occasion that the scribe of H4 does gloss one of the “highly rhetorical” passages early in Book I—the first intrusion of the narratorial voice, in a meditation on the fallibility of pride beginning with the apostrophaic “O blynde world, O blynde entencioun!”—H4’s scribe does gloss the passage, but only with the word “nota”; it seems more likely, here, that his interest lies not in the poetic technique of the passage, but in its discourse on pride, a topic which receives further glossing elsewhere in the poem.285

Interpretation of the supposedly rhetorical glosses is further complicated by a series of annotations that appear formally identical to the rhetorical glosses, yet which do not identify common rhetorical genres in the way that “peticio,” “exemplum,” or “laudare” would:

IV.688 verba & lamentacio mulierum cressaid’
IV.717 ploracio cressaid’
IV.745 lamentacio .C.
V.689 verba. Cressaid’ condolenia pro troili

285 British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 4v.; l.211. 

of Exeter’s Iliad—Chaucer’s source for the passages, which are very closely translated from the Latin—that are treated by current scholarship on the Troilus glosses as the work of the poet himself. See Benson and Windeatt, “Glosses,” 33; Boffey, “Annotation in Some Manuscripts of Troilus,” 12; Butterfield, “Mise-en-Page and Troilus,” 60; R.K. Root, “Chaucer’s Dares” Modern Philology 15.1 (1917): 1-22, appears to be working from the presumption that they are Chaucer’s, as well.
“Ploracio,” for example, is not to be found among the key terms of rhetorical analysis in *De inventione, Rhetorica ad Herenium*, or *Institutio oratoria*. The lament, or complaint, is briefly discussed in *De inventione* under the term “conquestio,” identified as “oratio auditorum misericordiam captans.”\textsuperscript{286} To these glosses, we might add, as well, other, more implicitly affectively-concerned glosses. A gloss at fol. 108v. notes the “diffidencia troili de .c.” when Troilus admits to Criseyde that he worries she will find another lover among the Greeks and forget about Troy, which “...to me so grevous is to thynke / That fro my brest it wol my soule rende.”\textsuperscript{287} Likewise, Troilus’ speech at V.218-245, upon his return from delivering Criseyde into the Greek camp—itself a magnificent example of anaphora that is unremarked upon by the scribe—is accompanied by a gloss at its beginning, noting the “verba .t. in absentia .c.”, a comment that implicitly underscores the deeply pathetic quality of the passage’s language.\textsuperscript{288}

This particular subject, focused on the practice of inciting one’s audience to feel a particular emotion, receives a fair bit of attention from both Cicero and Quintillian, who note that it is crucial in persuading a judge or jury of one’s arguments, but must be done carefully, at the risk of the orator appearing

\textsuperscript{286} *De inventione* l. lv. 106. The passage goes on to note sixteen topics from which a *conquestio* may be drawn (l.lv.106-lvi.109).

\textsuperscript{287} British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 108v.; IV.1492-93.

\textsuperscript{288} British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 116v; V.218-45.
ridiculous.\textsuperscript{289} If these are not, strictly speaking, common terms of formal analysis, they represent a formal interpretation of certain elements of the poem directed toward a particular emphasis on the affective states of the lovers at moments in the narrative where they express personal suffering. Given the emphasis in rhetorical handbooks on the role of the emotions in oratory, this is certainly literary criticism of the poem, of a particular stripe, but it suggests to us that the scribe of H4 is interested in the style in which these speeches are given for reasons that, at times, go deeper than superficial interest in the ornamented language of the poem.

It is unrealistic, of course, to deny that certain of these annotations do illustrate scribal interest in the discipline of rhetoric, marking out particular types of orations much as the scribe carefully marked off the divisions between narrative and lyric segments of the poem. Yet it is likewise difficult to assign a single motive to composition of these rhetorical glosses. Rather, the lesson we should take away

\textsuperscript{289}The topic of the emotions in rhetoric is the focus of the sixth book of Quintilian’s \textit{Institutio oratoria}, with VI.2 concentrating on the use of the emotions in general, and subsequent chapters focusing on specific affective responses, namely laughter and altercation, and the final chapter, on wise judgment in their use. He observes that arousing the emotion of an audience is the “life and soul of the work [of oratory]” (\textit{Institutio oratoria} VI.2.7), locating the power of eloquence there: “Namque in hoc eloquentiae uis est, ut iudicem non in id tantum compellat in quod ipsa rei natura ducetur, sed aut qui non est aut maiorem quam est faciat affectum. Haec est illa quae dinois uocatur, rebus indignis asperis inuidiosis addens uim oratio...” (\textit{Institution oratoria} VI.24) and exhorts orators to themselves feel emotion, rather than pantomime its outward signs, lest they appear ridiculous to their audience, noting, “Summa enim, quantum ego quidem senti, circa mouendos affectus in hoc posita est, ut moueamur ipsi. nam et luctus et irae et indignationis aliquando etiam ridicula fuerit imitatio, si uerba uultumque tantum non etiam animum accommodarimus.” (\textit{Institutio oratoria} VI.2.26). His advice here is in keeping with the earlier Ciceronian and Pseudo-Ciceronian texts to which \textit{Institutio oratoria} is indebted; Cicero cautions, for example, that the \textit{conquestio} should not be of long duration: “commotis autem animis diutius in conquestione morari non oportet. quaemadmodum enim dixit rhetor Apollonius, ‘lacrima nihil citius arescit.’” (\textit{De inventione} I.iii.109). \textit{De inventione} discusses two types of arguments seeking to elicit an emotional response in listeners—the \textit{indignatio} and the \textit{conquestio}, discussed above—which occupy Book I.iii.100-Ivi.109).
from these marginalia is that to understand them fully, we should be instead considering the possible of multiple purposes, beyond strict delineation of moral or otherwise didactic literacy, to the *mise-en-page* of H4, from the rhetorical markers to the *notae* and the source glosses that make up the majority of the manuscript’s marginalia.

In order, then, to assess H4’s interest in enabling ethical reading practices, we should start by considering the ways in which these glosses do conform to reading of the poem as handbook on love, moral or otherwise. Just as a select sampling of the rhetorical markers appear to function as identifications or rhetorical genres, there are undeniably places in which the marginalia in H4 highlight moral maxims and advice for those who wish to conduct love affairs. Two of the first glosses in H4, a pair of *notae*, lend a great deal of credibility to an interpretation of the glosses that emphasizes the poem’s didactic utility. They appear at folio 12r., accompanying Pandarus’ first attempt to ingratiate himself into Troilus’ confidence.\(^{290}\) Unhappy, and naïve in love though Troilus may be, he voices skepticism that his friend, with his own demonstrable history of amorous misfortune, can offer any assistance. Pandarus mounts an eloquent defense of his ability to provide guidance, echoing the strategies that render Ovid’s love poetry appropriate for the scholastic audience: just as men may learn by following the examples of good lovers, they may see how Ovid depicts foolish and immoral lovers, and do the opposite. Likewise, Pandarus claims, he can aid his friend: blind men

\(^{290}\) British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 12r.; l.637-42.
may pass where others fall, fools may teach wise men, and though he has never succeeded in gaining his lady's favor, he can teach Troilus how to win the object of his affections.

The speech itself comprises several stanzas and several constituent parts. It begins with Pandarus’ defense of his utility as praeceptor amoris, followed by the short exemplum of Oenone’s desertion by Paris and the narrative of Pandarus’ own amorous misfortunes, concluding with a series of maxims on the comfort to be found in a confidante. The glosses are placed in close proximity, at the beginning of the speech. Following a brief assertion of unwise counsellors’ utility, Pandarus proceeds to explain how they go about surmounting their own poor counsel and nonetheless instructing others:

And there thow wost that I have oht myswent
Eschewe thou that, for such good scole is;
Thus often wise men be war by foolis.
Yf thou so do, thi wit is weel bewarid;
For by his contrary every thyng is declared.
For how myhte swetnesse ever have be knowe
To him that never tastid bittirnesse?
Ne no man wot what gladnesse is, I trow,
That nevere was in sorwe or som distresse.
Eche whit bi blak, by shame eek worthynesse,
The coloures, and [know]eth w[ho] so [x]ht demyth.
Ech sit by other, more for other semeth,\textsuperscript{291}

Both notae direct readers' attention immediately to the mechanism by which fools prove effective praeceptores. Combined, they offer readers instruction on how to read the both the entire poem and the passages highlighted by annotations, and how

\textsuperscript{291} British Library MS Harley 2392, 12r. The line that is semi-illegible, l.643, is printed (as l.644) “As men may se, and so the wyse it demeth.” in The Riverside Chaucer.
to frame their own experiences with the rest of the text. Promoting a particular perspective on the ethical reading of love stories, they are an implicit reminder of the kind of story readers will encounter in *Troilus*, and the way in which they should read it. Though the value of wise counsel and the exempla of moral lovers is antithetically implied by Pandarus’ spirited self-defense, the interpretive method illustrated in his speech explicitly announces a hermeneutic practice derived from the valorization of its opposite—a hermeneutic that readers have been primed to identify in the poem from its opening lines. Told explicitly that they are reading not a happy exemplum of chaste, faithful, or married love, but the “double sorwe” of a character who will be betrayed before the story ends, they are here reminded of precisely how they ought to make use of the narrative.292

A later series of glosses, at II.329 (fols. 57r.-57v.) again reinforce this interpretive schema. They accompany a passage in which Pandarus advises Troilus against boasting of his developing relationship with Criseyde: boasting—twice an offense, and it makes liars of those who commit it—precludes successful or happy love affairs and frightens women away from dealing with men. Pandarus offers this advice, he claims, not because he mistrusts his friend, but because “wise ben by foles harm chastised.”293 Here, in the margin, the scribe has written “nota.” Troilus’ story is ultimately one of foolish, unchaste love; morally upstanding readers should learn

292 British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 1r.; I.1.
293 British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 57v.; III.329.
from it and conduct their own affairs otherwise; the *nota* on 12r and 57v reinforces such a reading of the poem.

This interpretive framing device is supplemented by a collection of marginalia, distributed throughout the poem, highlighting advice to lovers and a few more generally applicable maxims. These latter glosses comprise a selection of instructive sayings of use not only to the would-be amorous, but to a general readership. Pandarus’ aforementioned critique of the braggadocious further underscores the vaingloriousness of boasting in the hands of H4’s scribe, who draws attention with a *nota* to Chaucer’s explicit statement that:

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... al is untrue
That men of yelpe, and it were brought to preve.
Of kynde non avauntour is to leve.
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Pandarus’ spirited defense of the virtue of foolish or inexperienced counsel concludes with a series of maxims encouraging Troilus to disclose his woes: he is wretched who is alone, for he has no one to help him rise when he falls; delight is not to be found in wallowing in sadness; misery is consoled by company. This section of the passage begins with Pandarus’ exhortation that Troilus trust him. His reasoning here is somewhat specious, based on a maxim that it is foolish equally to trust everything one hears and nothing at all, but it is this maxim to which the scribe directs readers’ attention with a *nota*. There are a number of these expressions of general wisdom to which the scribe calls attention, glossed at times with a simple *nota*, at times with some slightly more complex gloss delineating precisely what

294 British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 57r.; Ill. 304-306.
readers are intended to be noting. Collecting a letter from his niece to Troilus in
Book II, Pandarus observes that the difficulty the soon-to-be lovers have
experienced will be ultimately to their benefit, for a love too-easily won is just as
easily forgotten. The Chaucerian text includes the sole Middle English witness to the
proverb whence Pandarus draws his argument, observing, “Impressiounes lighte /
Ful lightly ben ay redy to the flight.”295 H4’s scribe appears to have felt it an
important enough proverb to not only direct attention to the lines, but to inscribe
their Latin equivalent in the margins, which reads, “Leuis impressio leuis
recessio.”296 This sort of glossing certainly contributes to the impression of the
poem as a vehicle for ethical instruction, if not specifically of the moral, amatory
variety, buoyed by the philosophical weight of casting the poem as a lesson to be
learned from the mistakes of others.

A further series of glosses draw readerly attention specifically to passages in
the poem that offer advice to lovers. Perhaps interestingly for modern readers who
extol the psychological realism of Chaucer’s depiction of Criseyde’s self-reflective
inner life, one of the earliest of these occurs at II.756, as she debates within herself
the advisability of entering once more into a relationship. Weighing the negatives of
love in her inner debate, she reflects upon her current autonomy, unchecked by the
contrary will of a spouse. The desire to remain “unteyd” is founded on an
unflattering characterization of husbands, who “either ... ben ful of jalousie, / Or

maisterfull, or loven novelrie.”297 At this passage, the scribe carefully delineates the lesson to be taken from the text at this point, instructing readers, “nota contra maritos.” This gloss offers a surprisingly sympathetic account, at this point, of the scribe’s reading Criseyde’s character; not simply antifeminist, he appears to recognize the inherent delicacy in her accepting an unknown lover. At the same time, the gloss might be understood as fulfilling a particular didactic purpose: already inclined to accept the unhappy fortunes of others as instructive exempla of how not to conduct one’s affairs, amatory or otherwise, readers are here presented with an exemplum of how not to dispose themselves towards lovers.

A still clearer example of this particular hermeneutic can be found at III.171. The gloss appears, in form, similar to those annotations termed “rhetorical,” by previous scholarship, reading “monicio .C.”298 If understood not simply as a marker delineating a particular formal classification of the passage, it emerges as a decidedly didactic explication of a dialogue that sketches the parameters of Troilus and Criseyde’s affair. The gloss appears at the head of a speech representing a crucial turning point in the poem, as Criseyde consents at last to the union and proceeds to a very clear elaboration of her expectations:

“But natheles, this warne I yow,” quod she,  
“A kynes sone although ye be, ywys,  
Yeshal namore han sovaregnete  
Of me in love, than right in that cas is;  
N'y nyl forbere, if that ye don amys,  

297 British Library MS Harley 2392, 33v.; II.755-56.

298 British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 54v.; III.171.
To wratthe yow; and whil that ye me serve,
Chericen yow right after ye disserve
And shortly, deere herte and al my knyght,
Beth glad, and draweth yow to lustinesse,
And I shal trewely, with al my myght,
Youre bittre tornen al into swetenesse.”

This particular passage comprises a clear and concise delineation of the correct way to conduct oneself in a love, from a moral perspective advising—and valorizing—courtly conduct, if not the more evidently Christian amatory values of chastity or fidelity in matrimonial love. In singling this passage out specifically as advice, the scribe’s purportedly formalist critical interests are evidently ethical, as well; in the larger context of a series of annotations reimagining the poem as an ethical *ars amatoria*, this passage is explicitly termed worthy of careful study and imitation, as advice not only to Troilus but to Chaucer’s readers.

An number of similar, if less overt, passages are found throughout the poem: Pandaratus attempts to browbeat his niece into accepting Troilus’ friendship with the argument that, when she is old, no one will desire or love her; this is glossed with a *nota*. Two lines further, Pandaratus observes, proverbially, “To late ywar, quod Beaute, whan it paste; / And Elde daunteth Daunger at the laste”; again, the scribe calls readers’ attention to the warning, this time with the clear direction, “nota contra non amantes.” A selection of the earliest glosses in the manuscript comprise a collection of general wisdom on love: an definition of love as “he that alle

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299 British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 54v.; III.170-180.
300 British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 27v.; II.396.
301 British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 27v.; II.398-99.
thing may bynde, / For may no man fordon the lawe of kynde” is accompanied by
the observation, “de potestate amoris.” At I.384, Chaucer begins the first of
several exhortations drawn straight from Ovid’s playbook, advising lovers to keep
their affairs secret. The Middle English text succinctly explains that Troilus takes it
upon himself to hide the stirrings of love, “Remembryng hym that love to wide
yblowe / Yelt bittre fruyt, though swete seed be sowe.” The scribe marks this
passage, too, with a nota. A series of general maxims chastising hesitation and
delay, which supplement Troilus’ contrived and convoluted seduction-by-proxy of
Criseyde in Book III is glossed with a series of four marginalia insisting upon the
necessity of acting quickly, in general terms, and of quickly assuaging a paramour’s
suffering or jealousy, in the specific context of the poem.

It would likely be quite myopic to deny that these glosses demonstrate an
evident interest in this hermeneutic. Yet, as the guidelines for a clear and
straightforward interpretation of the poem as moral ars amatoria, they are
deployed throughout the poem in curiously haphazard fashion, making any firm
identification of this as the sole overarching interpretive scheme of H4 ultimately
unsatisfying. Some of these lacunae take the form of further advice to lovers
scattered through the poem, which remain unglossed. A series of exhortations to
secrecy in love, ranging through the first four books of the poem, receives no

302 British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 5r.; I.237.

303 British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 7v.; I.384-85.

additional marginal emphasis.\textsuperscript{305} The advice has, of course, classical precedent, with the need to conduct one’s affairs with taciturnity occupying, for example, Ovid’s attention in his \textit{Ars amatoria}, where he declares it a grave crime to share things that should be kept secret, graver still when speaking of love.\textsuperscript{306}

We might hope that, as part of an overarching process of rendering \textit{Troilus} appropriate for didactic consumption, this raw material would receive as much of the glossator’s attention as do the passages that are marked out in the margins for further consideration from future readers. Yet the marginalia evince a decided lack of attention paid to passages that point the way towards an interpretation of \textit{Troilus and Criseyde} as an exemplum of unhappy, unchaste love. Chaucer himself inscribes the potential for this hermeneutic in the text of the poem, in frankly informative foreshadowing of the narrative’s \textit{dénouement}, in vivid depictions of the torments endured by lovers, and in overt criticism of both Criseyde’s unfaithfulness and of lovers in general. At times, this foreshadowing is uncomplicated: the poet’s infamous auto-exegesis in the poem’s opening stanzas, in which he declares his subject to be “the double sorwes ... / of Troilus in lovyng of Criseyde, / And how that she forsook hym er she deythe” represents an clear explication of both the narrative to come and the genre of \textit{Troilus} itself, a statement that is reinforced, 

\textsuperscript{305} For example, I.740-48; II.379-85; III.281-87; III.470-83; III.764-65; IV.1560-1585.

\textsuperscript{306} “Exigua est virtus praestare silentia rebus: / At contra gravis est culpa tacendi loqui. / ... / Praecipue Cytherea iubet sua sacra taceri: Admoneo, veniat nequis ad illa loquax.” Ovid, \textit{Ars amatoria}, in \textit{Amores, Epistulae, Medicamina faciei feminineae, Ars Amatoria, Remedia Amoris}, edited by Rudolph Merkel (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1907): II.604-609.
albeit obliquely, by the poet terming his poem “litel myn tragedye” in the famous envoy to the poem in Book V.\textsuperscript{307} Neither of these passages appears to have been of any particular interest to the scribe; at least, he has not marked them for future study.

At other times, this foreshadowing is subtler, coalescing around poetic reworkings of Boethius’ \textit{Consolatio philosophiae}. The proem to Book IV offers the most concrete example of this particular school of foreshadowing, in which Chaucer’s narrative moves abruptly from Troilus’ happy possession of Criseyde to an ominous declaration of the transience of Fortune’s favor. The consequences for Troilus are unavoidably bleak: Troilus is cast down from Fortune’s wheel and Diomede set at its heights, and the \textit{materia} of the final two books turns to “...how Criseyde Troilus forsook — / Or at the leeste, how that she was unkynde.”\textsuperscript{308} The proem is accompanied by a single annotation, a gloss at IV.22, Chaucer’s invocation of the Furies, with a clarification of the term “Herynes,” bolstered by brief quotation from Lucan.\textsuperscript{309} H4’s scribe has clearly read the proem with the intent of marking information worth retaining, but the explicit reminder of Troilus’ looming disappointment appears not to have captivated his interest, or been deemed significant enough to merit its being singled out for future readers to interpret and synthesize into an understanding of \textit{Troilus} as an exemplum of immoral love.

\textsuperscript{307} British Library MS Harley 2392, fols. 1r and 144v; l.54-56 and V.1786.

\textsuperscript{308} British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 84v: IV.15-16.

\textsuperscript{309} British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 85r; IV.22. “Herine/ furie infernales vnde lucanus me pronuba ducit herinis” [The Erinyes / infernal furies; from Lucan: the Fury gave me in marriage].
As Troilus’ narrative winds towards its unhappy end, the text grows increasingly critical of Criseyde, as pat observations that she will betray Troilus intensify into overt declarations of her infamy and monstrosity. These criticisms, like the ominous warnings of the plot’s rapid spiral into betrayal and misery, are overwhelmingly unannotated, though the manuscript remains glossed through the final folios. A note in the outer margin of fol. 131v.—similar, in form, to rhetorical markers identifying literary genre—accompanies Criseyde’s worry that for taking a new lover, her reputation in love will forever be ruined, with the comment: “prophetia Criseyde” [the prophecy of Criseyde].

The marginalia—a genre marker or summary aid—proves an interpretational challenge: does the scribe wish later readers to note only the rhetorical mode in which Criseyde is speaking? Or are future readers meant to consider the content of the passage, more than the voice in which it is spoken, and meditate upon the consequences faced by women who betray loyal men. Though far from ruling out a the more

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310 British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 131v; V.1060-64. There are, as well, a collection of glosses sprinkled through Diomede’s seduction attempts which, far from condemning Criseyde, instead appear to suggest sympathy with her predicament. I will return to these particular glosses below, but it is worth noting here, that they also pass in silence over the passages in which she denies Troilus—or indeed, any other love, since her late husband’s death, at V.974-87.

311 See C. David Benson and Lynne S. Blanchfield, The Manuscripts of Piers Plowman: The B-Version (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), who observe, “Scribal annotations will not then provide the key to the difficulties of Piers Plowman. Indeed, they are often maddeningly elusive. When we find a mota sign next to a line, even a line that seems important to us for a particular reason, we cannot be sure exactly what the scribe found so notable” (10).

312 The prophetic or revelatory ode of speaking was one of the literary modes which annotations in vernacular manuscripts might highlight. See Kathryn Kerby-Fulton and Denise Despres, Iconography and the Professional Reader: The Politics of Book Production in the Douce Piers Plowman, Medieval Cultures 15 (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999) and Minnis, Medieval Theory of Authorship, 124-28.
deeply critical explication of the poem, the absence of any particular scribal attention at the remaining passages introducing condemnation of Criseye into the text is suggestive. On the facing leaf, the narratorial voice observes that he prefers not to chide Criseye further than the plot requires, as her infamy has already been written far and wide. Here, the scribe of H4 appears to have had no interest in further marking the literary punishment Criseye has earned. The connection appears not to have been lost on one later reader, who scrawls “vengans” in the inner margin of fol. 131v, between the two passages which sit directly across the gutter of the page from one another. H4’s scribe, however, appears uninterested.

Despite his avowed distaste for further critique of poor, “sely” Criseye, Chaucer allows Troilus an extensive speech reflecting on her betrayal, the destruction of her reputation, and as a consequence, of anyone’s ability to put their faith in oaths henceforth, to all of which Pandarus replies with a fervent declaration that he hates his niece, and shall evermore. We see evidence of scribal highlighting in this passage in other manuscripts, most notably S1, which labels four successive stanzas of Troilus’ lament “complent,” after advising readers to “nota bene de Troily how he complenit”; in H4, however, the passage is entirely unglossed.

The final declaration of Criseye’s guilt—and the poet’s excuse to women for slandering their sex in the form of Criseye—likewise demonstrates a lacuna in the marginal inscribing of future readerly priorities. Bookended between two glossed

313 British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 132r; V.1093-95.

314 British Library MS Harley 2392, fols. 142v-143v; V.1674-1733.
references to Chaucer’s sources in classical mythology—one, instructing avid readers to turn to Dares if they wish to know more about the military exploits of the Trojan war, the other, offering readers a story about Penelope or Alceste as part of the poet’s penance to his female audience members—the poet begs the women reading or listening to *Troilus* not to be angry with him for the faults of his character.\textsuperscript{315} The annotations—source glosses from originary mythological materials—that frame this apology in the margins are clearly interested in identifying the people to whom Chaucer refers; one expresses the Latin equivalent of the poet’s claim that they can learn about Troilus’ *faits d’armes* elsewhere, proclaiming, “Dares/ auctor nobilitatis troili” [Dares, the famous author of *Troilus*]. The other explains, “Penelope/ vxor Ulysis Alceste/ vxor Admeti/ regis” [Penelope, wife of Ulysses, Alceste, wife of king Admetus]. The scribe of H4 has demonstrably found information in this part of the poem which he thinks relevant to future readers, but none of it dwells on the deeply damaging punishment faced by the authors, literal or figurative, of such scandal.

The largest obstacle to understanding the composition and glossing of H4 as a concentrated and unified effort to create a moral handbook on love rests on the scribe’s treatment of the final stanzas of the narrative, immediately following Troilus’ death. The majority of manuscripts explain that, as soon as Troilus was killed by Achilles, his soul ascended to the eighth sphere of the heavens, where he looked down upon the world, scorns its wretchedness and vanity, and laughs

\textsuperscript{315} British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 144r; V.1770-1778.
outright at his mourners. These three stanzas are, however, missing from H4. This omission adds further difficulty to an interpretation of the manuscript deeply focused on its predilection towards moral hermeneutics, though it cannot itself be decisively judged the work of H4’s scribe himself, rather than a variant reading inherited from his exemplar. Still, it remains an influence on the particular text of *Troilus* with which the manuscript’s readers were confronted, and appears, moreover, consonant with the curious lack of emphasis the scribe places on the poem’s conclusion. The remainder of the end of the poem appears intact in H4, such that immediately after Achilles kills Troilus, the poem emphatically proclaims this tragedy the outcome of the narrative, and of Troilus’ life, nobility, and love, its origins located squarely in the moment he first is struck by Cupid’s dart:

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Such fyn, hath loo, this Troilus for loue
Such fyn, hath al his gret worthynesse
Such fyn, hath his estat roial, aboue,
Such fyn, his lust, such fyn his noblesse
Such fyn, hath the fals worldes brotilnesse
And thus bigan, his louyng of Cressaide
And as I haue told, in this wise, he daide.316
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The causality between Troilus’ love affair and the suffering he endures in the final books of the poem, even his eventual death, is nowhere more clearly defined than in this stanza—which lacks of the previous stanzas which declare Troilus’ afterlife a happy one—where the passage grows darker, indicative of the sort of direct consequence that would lend weighty support to a reading of the poem meant

316 British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 144v; V.1828-1834. I have here corrected the manuscript’s reading of the fifth line, which clearly reads “worldes” to “worldes.”
to reinforce virtuous conduct in its readers. It is, moreover, followed by two stanzas exhorting readers to an unequivocally Christian, moral interpretation of the poem, instructing them to consider the transience of the world and turn their attentions instead to their Creator.\textsuperscript{317} These three stanzas present a wealth of textual \emph{auctoritas} upon which to anchor a version of the poem that functions exactly as H4 supposedly does, inscribing upon the poem the sort of interpretive practices demonstrated in numerous ethical explications of Latin love poetry. Yet, the scribe of H4 passes over these stanzas without a single annotation. He does gloss parts of the final verses of the poem, marking Troilus’ death with “Achilles/ interfecit troilum” and the envoy to Gower—here interestingly addressed as “mortal” rather than “moral” Gower—is glossed “nota de gower”.\textsuperscript{318} The absence of glossing does not appear to be the result, for example, of a program of commentary that never quite made it to the end of the manuscript. Rather, it seems that H4’s scribe simply was not interested in these portions of the poem.\textsuperscript{319}

It is difficult to speculate as to what extent a glossator like the scribe of H4 ought to demonstrate consistency in his editorial program, yet the preference he exercises in identifying \emph{sententiae} and \emph{exempla} with which an indeterminate future audience might engage in self-refashioning as better—whether more ethical or simply more efficient—lovers are selective enough to suggest that this is not likely

\textsuperscript{317} British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 145r; V.1835-1848. See above.

\textsuperscript{318} Also glossed in S1 with “gower” at \textit{Troilus} V.1856. See Benson and Windeatt, “Glosses,” 53. The variant reading “mortal” for “moral” appears only in H4.

\textsuperscript{319} British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 144v-145r; V.1806 and 1860.
to have been the sole end to which he carefully crafted the manuscript. At the least, his unconcerned treatment of the sections of the poem that most explicitly point readers toward such a hermeneutic makes a reading of H4 as “moral amatory handbook” difficult to accept. It remains, then, to elucidate what other concern, or concerns, governed the composition of H4’s marginalia.

In order to further understand the motives governing the scribe’s practices in copying *Troilus*, I will examine the manuscript’s marginalia at both the macro and the micro level, discussing how they is distributed throughout the text, identifying specific points in the narrative with frequent annotation as likely interesting to the scribe, and then focusing on the particular interpretive concerns that these individual glosses suggest, based on the specific lines they gloss, and the content to which they direct readers to pay specific attention.
CHAPTER 5:

REWRITING TROILUS AND CRISEYDE AS AMATORY HANDBOOK: AFFECTIVE LITERACY AND THE MARGINALIA OF HARLEY 2392

5.1 Scripting Affective Reading in Harley 2392

Chapter Three weighs the evidence for a reading of H4 in which its glosses re-script the manuscript as a moral handbook of love. It concludes that, though the glosses do display interest in ethical approaches to reading at certain points, they also pass silently over passages most suited to recasting the poem as a Troilus moralisé. In Chapter Four, then, I address alternative literacies in the manuscript, arguing that the glosses enable an affective reading of the poem in which readers engage in scripted contemplation of the poem’s emotional subject. The annotations in H4 appear throughout the poem, from its first few stanzas to its final envoy to Gower; most bifolia display at least a stray gloss or two. However, there are a few overarching narrative points in which the glossing is significantly more concentrated. The first of these is the extensive segment of Book III depicting the first physical consummation of the lovers’ affair, beginning with Pandarus’ plot to bring the two together after a dinner party on an evening with cooperatively stormy weather, and culminating in their very vocal displeasure with the arrival of dawn the following day. The second narrative point to receive significant marginal
attention, this one in Book V—and to which this analysis returns in the next
section—is the extensive discourse between Criseyde and Diomede as he attempts
to persuade her to accept his advances and abandon her fidelity to Troilus.

The extensive glossing in Book III is concentrated, more specifically, around
three smaller plot points. The first of these is a cluster of thirteen annotations in
both the inner and outer margins of fol. 64v. which identify the series of allusions to
classical mythology that form the basis of Troilus’ petition to the gods, before he
begins the events that will culminate in his sexual union with Criseyde. The glosses
refer largely to material from Ovid’s Metamorphoses—Chaucer’s source material for
the passage—and consist overwhelmingly of brief explanations of the stories to
which Chaucer alludes, a few citations of the specific book of the Metamorphoses
from which the allusion is drawn, and in two cases, clarification of the specific figure
whom Troilus addresses.320 They appear, at first glance, to suggest simple scribal
interest in the mythological dynamic of the poem by providing authoritative
(latinate) source glossing—which is admittedly more prominently deployed in this

320 The cluster of glosses, all on fol. 64v., reads, going down the page: “oratio troili” [the
prayer of Troilus] (left margin; III.712); “id est iupiter fadir” [That is, Jupiter, the father] (right
margin; III.718); “Amor venus Aadoon etc” [the love of Venus for Adonis] (right margin; III.720);
“methamorphoseos Xo capitulo hos tu care mihi” [Metamorphoses chapter 10, you, my darling.
abstain yourself from these things] (left margin; III.721); “perlege/ methamorphoseos ii.” [read
metamorphoses 2] (left margin; III.722); “Amor louis Ewropas etc” [the love of Jupiter for Europa]
(right margin, III.722); “Amor martis Cipressus” [the love of Mars for Cypris (Venus)] (right margin;
III.725); “methamorphoseos i. Vix precatur prece finita etc” [Metamorphoses 1. Scarcely is the
prayer completed] (left margin; III.726); “amor phebi dannas” [the love of Phebus for Daphne] (right
margin; III.727); “Amor mercury hirses” [the love of Mercury for Herse] (right margin; III.729);
“methamorphoseos ii.” [Metamorphoses 2] (left margin; 730); “id est luna diana” [That is Diana, the
moon] (right margin; III.731); “tres sorores fatales cloto. lathesis. & atropos una cloto colum baiulat”
[the fatal sisters Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, one is Clotho, who spins the thread] (left margin;
III.733).
passage than elsewhere in Troilus—or potentially to harmonize with a reading of the poem that highlights exempla of both moral and unchaste lovers. The former may certainly be part of the scribe’s concern—he does display demonstrable interest in the poem’s mythological sources—but the poem also contains mythological references in which he evinces no interest; I would contend, rather that this selectivity suggests a need for deeper consideration of why this particular passage is so heavily glossed. Moreover, the latter option, the suggestion that this passage is annotated because it contains multiple and various exempla of mythological lovers, is likewise overly simplistic.

The classical stories at the heart of the passage may well be themselves interpreted in accordance with a morally didactic hermeneutic, but they are not deployed this way in the passage. Rather, Troilus invokes the particular deities that he does, reminding them of their historical frustrations in love, some of which are successfully overcome—Mars with Venus, Mercury with Herse, Jupiter and Europa—others which are not—Venus and Adonis, Phebus and Daphne, in a concerted bid for sympathy to his cause. He is looking, in other words, to provoke a specific, affective reaction, based on the personal and presumably at least partially inner lives of a series of patron deities, with the hope of persuading them to aid him in a plight that is itself deeply emotionally charged. The specific language with which Chaucer composes the petition itself takes on a profoundly personal affective, and at times meditative tone, repeatedly expressing a somewhat formulaic petition for divine favor “for love” of the object of their affections, and in the case of Apollo,
specifically requesting him to reflect on his foreshortened pursuit of Daphne and the frustrated love Troilus presumes he still bears her.321

The annotations in the inner margin of this passage echo the formulaic language of Troilus' petition. They stress not the successes of certain gods, or the disappointed hopes and misfortune of others, but the fact of the stories' emotional component: they emphasize the “Amor” of each exemplum, rather than its outcome. We might note, as well, a curious display of selectivity in the way the citations of the Metamorphoses are displayed in the left margin: two consist solely of citation of the chapter in which the stories in question occur; two others also contain brief quotation. The two citation-only annotations append the tales of Jupiter and Europa, and Mercury and Herse, two of the three exempla of successful lovers, and direct readers to the second chapter of the Metamorphoses. The two source quotations—both of which also contain citation of the specific chapter of the poem where the quotations occur—gloss the stories of thwarted amorous pursuit: those of Venus and Adonis, and of Daphne and Apollo. The quotations themselves, though brief, point very specifically to narrative moments at which the mythical lovers’ stories turn towards frustration or tragedy: the instant at which Daphne begins to change into a laurel tree, and Venus’ warning to Adonis to flee the instrument of his eventual death. The scribe of H4 here demonstrates a preference for deepening readers’ involvement in the unhappier tales. Inasmuch as the concrete language of

321 British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 64v. III.720-735. The petition to Apollo reads, “O Phebus, thynk whan Dane hireselven shette / Vndir the bark, and lawrer wex for dread; / Yit for hir love, yit help now at this need!” (III.726-729).
the individual glosses directs the readers to a particular hermeneutic enterprise—
the scribe is admittedly consistently reticent on the subject of a particular moral he
wishes readers to extract from the text—his marginalia display a preference,
certainly, for the exempla of love narratives ending in misfortune, but one which is
anchored in the iterative affirmation of the stories' emotional core, its relevance to
Troilus' own predicament, and its specific function as the grounds on which he
hopes to inspire sympathy in his divine patrons. This affective dynamic, I contend,
represents a source of interest for the scribe of H4, which is reflected in the
deployment of his annotation program throughout the manuscript.\footnote{322}

The second concentration of annotations in H4 clusters around three specific
exchanges in the dialogue between Troilus and Criseyde once they are reunited
through Pandarus' machinations. The glosses concern three specific conversations.
The first resolves the fabricated conflict between the two; the second follows their
growing physical intimacy, and the third, their lamentation at the arrival of dawn.
These concentrations of marginalia at first appear rather disparate, yet they all
share an underlying thread of emphasis on affectivity, similar to that at the heart of

\footnote{322 Interestingly, the scribe glosses, as well, Pandarus' immediate response to Troilus' speech: he exclaims, "thou wretched mouses herte / art thou agast for that she wil the bite?", to which the scribe calls attention in the margins with the gloss "Nota quod p. dicebat .T. here cor muris" [Note that Pandarus says that Troilus has a mouse's heart]. British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 65r; III.736-737. It is more difficult to speculate as to his interest in this particular passage. Perhaps he is simply interested in the response that Troilus' extensive, highly rhetorical speech garners; perhaps he intends to highlight critical tone with which Troilus is received, or wishes to illuminate a particular aspect of Pandarus' character. It is itself critical of Troilus on affective grounds—it is his demonstrable fear that Pandarus appears to find worthy of mockery; it is possible that the scribe's interest lies in the passage's deepening depiction of Troilus' emotional inner world. Whatever motive we might adduce to this particular annotation, however, it adds to the impression of the scribe's concern with this particular monologue, and potentially reinforces our understanding of his interest in its emotional dynamic.}
Troilus’ petition to the gods, which I argue is of particular interest to the scribe of H4.

The first small cluster of glosses is that added to the resolution of Troilus’ purported jealous belief that Criseyde favors another lover. Four marginalia span just over two stanzas; the first two bear a formal resemblance to source quotation glosses, though they do not actually quote from any obvious source material at this point; the third draws readers’ attention to the lovers’ resolution of the quarrel. The fourth appends the “exemplum alaude” at III.1191. The pseudo-source glossing offers readers two biblical quotations in the margins of Criseyde’s dialogue: she forgives Troilus for his supposed jealousy and asks forgiveness for causing any grief:

> And she anwerde, “Of gilt misericorde! beati misericord’
> That is to seyn, that i foryeve al this;
> And evere more on this nyght yow recorde,
> And beth wel was ye do namore amys.”
> “Nay, dere herte myn,” quod he, “iwis!”
> “And now,” quod she, “that I have don yow smerte,
> Foryeve it me, myn owene swete herte.” petite et actipitis

The passage’s immediate impression is of a scribe offering the weighty support of scriptural auctoritas to the resolution of a minor narrative crisis: Criseyde forgives Troilus’ jealousy, and the marginal quotation offers scriptural approbation of her mercy. She asks forgiveness herself, and the gloss proleptically affirms its receipt with scriptural precedent. This impression is anchored with the third gloss, simultaneously tracing the narrative and calling readers’ attention to the restored

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323 British Library MS Harley 2392 fol. 72v; III.1177-83.
harmony between the two. Troilus’ response to her request for forgiveness is to embrace her; the scribe adds: “concordia inter C. & t.”

The fourth gloss in this sub-cluster, which reads “exemplum alaude”, concerns a curious analogy, in which Criseyde, wrapped in Troilus’ arms, is compared to a lark, caught by a bird of prey: “What myghte or may,” Chaucer asks, “the sely larke say, / Whan that the sperhauk hath it in his foot?” The annotation directs readers somewhat reticently simply to take note of the particular subject whence Chaucer’s analogy is drawn, leaving its hermeneutic motivation rather ambiguous. At its most basic level, the gloss suggests the scribe’s sustained interest in the physical embrace of the lovers—an interest to which he appears to return in the next sub-cluster of marginalia in this scene. The materia of the analogy lends an undertone of violence to the scene—certainly, the hawk’s intentions regarding the lark are not likely to turn out particularly well for the latter—which inescapably underscore by the annotation accompanying it, and which thus highlighted might serve to remind readers that the narrative is rushing headlong into an unhappy conclusion. Yet I would suggest that for the scribe of H4, it held further significance beyond the illumination of the ends facing immoral lovers. This passage lends the scene a particular affective flavor: phrased as an exercise in attempted empathy, as the narratorial figure attempts to understand the thoughts or feelings of the hawk’s prey, it depicts Criseyde as a creature defined by a particularly emotive experience

324 British Library MS Harley 2392 fol. 73r; III.1187.

325 British Library MS Harley 2392, fol. 73r; III. 1191-92.
which the reader is cued to imagine. Does she feel fear? Awareness of her lack of control, the events drawing her inexorably towards some looming catastrophe? The Chaucerian text does not answer the questions it poses—at least, not immediately—but the next annotation in H4, at the bottom of the same folio, reinforces the assertion that the scribe’s interest in glossing these passages lies somewhere beyond rote emphasis on the poem’s function as moral exemplum. The narrative returns to the lovers’ dialogue, and Troilus, picking up the thread of Chaucer’s brief meditation on the lark’s predicament, assures her that, now that they are alone together, she is caught, and has no other remedy but to yield to him. Criseyde’s response leaves altogether aside the darker undertones of the embrace suggested in the exemplum of the lark, as she answers him, “Ne had I or now, my suete herte deere, / Ben yolden, iwis, I were now not heere!”; the scribe directs readers to the passage with a nota.326 The ambiguity of the preceding analogy’s introspective empathetic exercise is somewhat lessened here, its implicit violence eroded, and its affective dynamic redirected: here, Criseyde is re-imagined not as captive prey but a seemingly willing participant in their union. The medieval reader might look back at the previous passage and imagine not the fear of the lark, but the feelings of a woman fully consenting to being captured, occupying, perhaps, a sliding scale between love and desire—an exercise requiring readers to access, and fill in the blanks from, their own affective faculties. The particular patterns of glossing on these two folia of H4 promote such a reading; the second sub-cluster of annotations

326 British Library MS Harley 2392 fol. 73r; III.1210-11.
in Book III, on the following folia, it is not only affirmed but further directed towards readers' self-evaluation and future practice.

The verso of this same folio begins the second sub-cluster of annotations. They consist of a set of two glosses spanning just over a stanza on fol. 73v, which returns to the subject of the lovers' embrace, and a cluster of four annotations on 74r, identifying the pagan gods addressed in Troilus' apostrophaic praise of love at III.1254-74. The latter marginalia, though clearly significant, receive less attention here—unlike those mythological references in Troilus' extensive address to the classical pantheon, they are more reticent on the subject of the deities in question, identifying them simply as patron gods of particular relevant concerns. Thus, the scribe explains that Cupid is the god of love, Venus, his mother, and Hymen the god of marriage and of bonds. These particular marginalia certainly display the potential to contribute to a particularly affective way of reading the poem. The passage they gloss represents the vocalization of an abundance of feeling, that bursts forth in ecstatic speech at a highly emotionally-charged, pivotal point in the narrative's development. The gods in question are primarily associated with love and its attendant institutions, and are identified as such. Yet the form that these marginalia take makes it somewhat difficult to point to any more significance than this; they function equally well simply as the explication of a series of pagan

\[327\] British Library MS Harley 2392 fol. 74r. The glosses read, in order: "id est cupidus luct" [that is Cupid, (god of) love] (III.1254), "Citherea mater cupidis" [Cytherea, mother of Cupid] (III.1255), "ymeneus deus nuptiarum" [Hymen, god of nuptials] (III.1258), and "hemaneus deus vinculorum" [Hymen, god of bonds] (III.1261).
references that the scribe could have anticipated being difficult for a Christian readership to interpret in the correct context.

The first two glosses, however, those on fol. 73v, participate more clearly in a recasting of the poem that emphasizes its underlying affective core, glossing two narratorial observations on the lovers’ embrace. The first encourages readers to take note of the text’s exhortation to women to follow Criseyde’s lead in analogous situations. Chaucer advises his female readership, “For love of God, take every womman heede / To werken thus, if it comth to the neede,” and the scribe notes, “concilium datur mulieribus.” Reticent though he is on the specific subject of how readers ought to interpret this advice—it may, perhaps, be marked for its irony, or as an example of bad counsel—it is nevertheless difficult to reconcile with the creation of a moral amatory handbook from the exemplum of Troilus and Criseyde’s story, in which ambiguous advice is as likely to encourage unchaste behavior like allowing oneself to yield to seduction as it is good. Inasmuch as this advice contributes to a reading of the poem as ars amatoria, it rests comfortably in the realm of the Ovidian treatise, rather than its moralized counterpart.

The second annotation on fol. 73v is still more difficult to assimilate into such a reading of H4. It accompanies a vivid elaboration on the lovers’ appearance in bed together that itself alludes to a history of romantic auctorites for Troilus’ lovers:

Criseyde, al quyt from every drede and tene,
As she that just cause hadde hym to triste,
Made hym swych feste it joye was to sene,

328 British Library MS Harley 2392 fol. 73v; III.1224-25.

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What she his trouthe and clene entente wiste;
And as aboute a tree, with many a twiste,
Bytrent and write the swote wodebynde,
Gan ech of hem in armes other wynde.

Vultum .c. & t

The gloss marks a passage visually imagining the two lovers as intertwined honeysuckle vine and the tree around which it grows, a metaphor already associated with the legendary tragic lovers Tristan and Isolde. The gloss in H4 does not cite this particular tradition; rather, it expressly identifies the figurative language of the passage as a description of the appearance of the two lovers. As an ethical or didactic gloss, it serves little function; even outside of such an interpretive scheme it is an enigmatic annotation. I would argue, however, that one more plausible potential function is as a sort of meditative cue, asking readers to dwell imaginatively on the visual language of the passage, and on the scene that it depicts. This, it insists, is what the lovers look like; and this imagery, the part of the passage that demands readers' close consideration. As such it emphasizes an

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329 British Library MS Harley 2392 fol. 73v; III.1226-32.

330 The metaphor becomes synonymous with not only the physical embrace of the lovers, as it is used in Troilus, but with their inseparability which verges on codependence. The Prose Tristan recounts a legend that after the lovers' deaths, a hazel tree and honeysuckle vine grow out of their graves and intertwine so that they cannot be separated, though Mark reportedly thrice cuts them apart, only to see them grow back together again. See Le Roman de Tristan en prose: version du manuscript fr. 757 de la Bibliotheque nationale de Paris), edited by Joël Blanchard, Michel Quereuil, and Christine Ferlampin-Acher (Paris; H. Champion, 1997). Marie de France's Lai de Chevrefeuille derives its title from this conceit, which is expounded in the lai itself as symbolic of the lovers' inability to survive separate from one another: “D'els dous fu il tut alcresi / cume del chievrefueil esteit / ki a la coldre se perneit / quant il s'i est laciese pris / e tut entur le fust s'est mis, / ensemble poeent bien durer; / mes ki puis les vuelt deseverer, / la coldre muert hastivement / e li chievrefueilz ensement. / 'Bele amie, si est de nus: / ne vus senz mei ne jeo senz vus!’” [For those two it is just as with the honeysuckle which clings to the hazel tree: when it takes hold and entwines itself and sets itself entirely around the tree, together they can survive, but whoever wishes to separate them, the hazel tree dies quickly, and the honeysuckle likewise. 'Sweet friend, so it is with us: neither you without me nor I without you!'] Marie de France, Lai de Chevrefeuille, in Marie de France Die Lais, edited by Karl Warnke, 181-85 (Halle: Verlag von Max Niemeyer): at lines 68-78.
interconnectedness that is deeply intimate in nature, and—if readers are sufficiently literate to recognize its antecedents in the Tristan tradition, which Bernard O’Donoghue suggests they should be\(^{331}\)—inherently associated with romance in general, and the affective dynamic of both Troilus and Criseyde, and the culmination of Book III in particular, a concrete expression of the abstract feeling at the heart of Tristan and Isolde’s inextinguishable love, and of the emotional impetus in the beginning of the stanza in Troilus that inspires the deepening of their embrace. The scribe of H4’s gloss might offer, then, a marker identifying passages of interest to readers seeking the text’s emotional core, or a signal meant to inspire readers to visualize, and perhaps imaginatively experience, for themselves the intimacy of Chaucer’s lovers.

The final sub-cluster of marginalia in Book III begins at fol. 76v, continuing on to 78r. The glosses that make up this sub-cluster consist of a mixture of identifications of both mythological and astrological material and notae, focuses on two overarching concerns: Chaucer’s defense of love as the materia of his poem, and his lovers’ extensive lamentation at the arrival of the dawn. The former occupies a narratorial intrusion into the progression of the poem: Chaucer leaves Troilus and Criseyde alone for a minute, to inform his readers that the covetous and wretched among them consider love a madness or folly, for which the poet assigns them the punishments met by their predecessors in classical mythology:

As wolde god tho wrecches that dispise
Servise of love hadde erys also longe
As hadde Mida, ful of coveytise, nota de crinibus
Mida
And therto dronken hadde as hoot and stronge
As Crassus did for his affectis wrong, Quo crassus bibit
To techen hem that they ben in the vice,
And loveres nought, althought they holde hem nyce.

Though these glosses, like the mythological references in the previous sub-cluster, do not themselves explicitly denote a particular interpretation of the text, the weight they add to Chaucer's justification of his choice of subject implicitly authorizes not only the English verse, but the depiction of the specific affective experience on which the poem rests. Indeed, to a certain extent, these glosses highlight a different method of establishing auctorite for the English poem that is not dependent on the moralizing re-imagining seen in the treatment of Ovid's amatory verse: the poetry is worth reading not because it offers examples of the consequences befalling immoral lovers, but because those who oppose it in the first place are themselves in the wrong, and will be dealt appropriate penance. As a buttress of the authority of love poetry, the glosses would appear to participate in a larger enterprise of marginal commentary in Book III that, rather than exhorting readers to a particular moral practice of love, explores its expression through a specific narrative.

It is hardly surprising, then, that the manuscript should witness several further glosses that focus the readers' attention on the deeply affective, at times lyrical passages that conclude the depiction of Troilus and Criseyde's first night
together. The verse becomes a series of aubades, as the two lament the arrival of
dawn, and the scribe of H4 displays particular interest in these lines, adding a total
of seven annotations explaining to the scene, spanning fols. 77r to 78v. The
majority of them identify mythological and astrological references including, most
puzzlingly, a gloss helpfully explaining that the “comune astrologo”—in Troilus, the
crowing rooster announcing the return of the sun—called “vulgaris astrologus” in
Latin, is in fact Alan of Lille, the author, as the scribe explains, of De planctu naturae.
What the scribe meant readers to make of this particular interpretation is not
specified. The remainder are somewhat less enigmatic: “Lucyfer” is identified as the
morning star, Alcmena, as the mother of Hercules, and the sphere from which
Phoebus is unlikely to fall, as the sphere of the sun. The scribe explicates Troilus’
scornful address to Titan, identifying him as a colleague of the lovers’ enemy, with
the explanation that the dawn is the friend of the sun. At their surface, these glosses
represent a concentrated effort to render the passage intelligible to H4’s readers
and mark it for attentive consumption. Presumably, this would indicate that the

332 The glosses read as follows: “nota Gallus vulgaris astrologus Alanus de planctu nature”
[note that in the Gallic vernacular the astrologer is Alan (of Lille) of the Plaint of Nature] (fol. 77r;
III.1415); “lucifer id est stella matutina” [Lucifer, that is the morning star] (fol. 77r; III.1417); “nota
verba... in aurora” [note the words of Criseyde at dawn] (fol. 77v; III.1424); “Almena fuit mater
herculis” [Alcmena was the mother of Hercules] (fol. 77v; III.1428); “nota” (fol. 78r; III.1454); “aurora
amica solis” [aurora, the friend of the sun] (fol 78r; III.1466); “id est sphera solis” [that is the sphere
of the sun] (fol. 78v; III.1495).

333 These readers are little defined by the manuscript provenance, but readers’ marks
include the name “Henrici Spelman”, likely Sir Henry Spelman, the 16th-17th-century antiquarian and
manuscript collector; later owners include Robert and Edward Harley, Henrietta Cavendish, and
Margaret Cavendish Bentinck, all English aristocrats. A further (likely earlier) readers’ mark on fol.
17v is erased. See Cyril Ernest Wright, e Harleiani: A study of the sources of the Harleian collection of
manuscripts preserved in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum (London: British
Museum, 1972). Of the manuscript’s medieval readers, we can assume that they were generally
lovers’ *aubades* hold a particular appeal for the scribe, but no more specific interpretation is offered.

These explanatory glosses are accompanied by two more: a *nota* at Troilus’ complaint at the sun’s insistent intrusion through every opening into the room, and the more specific “*nota verba .C. in aurora*.” It accompanies the beginning of Criseyde’s *aubade*, in which she expresses sorrow that the arrival of day will separate the lovers:

“Myn hertes lif, my trist, al my plesaunce,
That I was born, alas, what me is wo,
That day of us moot make disseveraunce! *nota verba .C. in aurora*”

It is difficult to adduce a particular ethical hermeneutic to this gloss; what consequences it does suggest for Troilus and Criseyde are fleeting, the temporary separation brought on by the arrival of morning shortly to be rectified, and no indication is given that the break of dawn here ought to be read metonymically as foreshadowing their eventual, more permanent separation. Rather, readers are directed to an outward expression of an openly affective reaction, on Criseyde’s part, to the abrupt end to their current liaison, and specifically directed to attend to the language in which that reaction is expressed. In the larger context of the scribe’s concentrated marginal privileging of the lyrical conclusion to the lovers’ first night anticipated to be Latin-literate, and relatively well-versed in classical literature—if they were meant to be able to chase down the citations of Ovid, the scribe must have expected them to have recourse to a copy—but perhaps not so well that they could or would recognize every mythological reference.

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together, this specific directive promotes the possibility of approaching the poem as an affectively motivated reader, whose experience of the poem is directed towards closer reading of highly emotional points in its narrative. Indeed, inasmuch as the three sub-clusters of marginalia spanning this particular scene in Book III demonstrate a clear connection to one another, that connection is at least partially determined by their shared attention to these sorts of highly emotional textual moments.

5.2 The Language of Love: Visual Imagery and H4’s Affective Marginalia

The ability of the marginalia in Book III’s to promote affective subsumption into the poem, and mimetic self-refashioning rides on the degree to which it can imaginatively immerse readers in the subjective experiences of its protagonists. In *Troilus*, the significant vehicle for this affective engagement is the deployment of intensely visual figurative language that offers readers a subjectivity which they can concretely envision and experience for themselves. We can find instructive parallels for this figurative vehicle in the texts of medieval mystics. Medieval religious texts intended to inspire meditation and deep affective identification with the text often employed similar linguistic approaches; in the affective theology of, for example, the *Stimulis Amoris*, the *Meditationes Vitae Christi* or *The Book of Margery Kempe* religious readers engage in intense visualization of the Crucifixion, recounting in detail not only the physical signs of the suffering of Christ, but also historical scenes
from a number of religious sites around the Holy Land. Margery’s recollections of the life of Christ explicitly cue her devotional weeping; their renarration in her book, likewise, recasts them in “emotionally provocative language linked to Christ’s Passion” which inspires her affective religious experience into similar cues for a wider audience. In the Revelation of Love, Julian explains that her vision—the famous passage encapsulating all of creation in a tiny object like a hazelnut, which she holds in her hand—was given to her, as she understands it, in order to “lerne our soule wisely to cleve to the goodnes of God.” Margery is still more explicit in both associating her visions with affective theological engagement, and in identifying this model of piety as an instructive example for both her contemporaries and her future readers. When praying for her confessor, who has been taken ill, Margery narrates, she is struck by a statue of a pietà and is moved, as

335 It is worth noting here that the Meditationes Vitae Christi was also available to medieval readers in an English translation by Nicholas Love. See Nicholas Love, The mirror of the blessed lyf of Jesu Christ: a translation of the Latin work entitled Meditationes Vitae Christi, edited by Lawrence Fitzroy Powell (Oxford: clarendon Press, 1908), particularly section III. The Stimulis Amoris was also avaialbel to medieval readers in English, as the Prickynge of Love. See The Prickynge of Love, vols. 1-2, edited by Harold Kane, Saltzburg Studies in English Literataure: Elizabethan and Renaissance Series (Saltzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1983). See also Margery Kempe, The Book of Margery Kempe, edited by Lynn Staley, TEAMS Middle English Texts Series (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1996).

336 Kempe, The Book of Margery Kempe, 79-82.


is common for her, to tears. In this state, she is both censured by another priest and observed by a local woman who has come to the church to seek her out:

  thorw the beholdyng of that petē hir mende was al holy occupied in the Passyōn of owr Lord Jhesu Crist and in the compassyōn of owr Lady, Seynt Mary, be whēch sche was compellyd to cryyn ful lowde and wepyn ful sor, as thei sche schulde a deyd. ... Whan hir crying was cesyd, sche seyd to the preste, ‘Sir, hys deth is as fresch to me as he had deyd this same day ... We awt evyr to han mende of hys kendnes and evyr thynkyn of the dolful deth that he deyd for us.’ Than the good lady, heryn her cummunicacyon, seyd, ‘Ser, it is a good exampyl to me, and to other men also, the grace that God wekyth in hir sowle.’

It is explicitly the contemplation of the Passion, and of Mary's suffering that makes Margery feel the rawness of Christ's death, and which moves her to tears; moreover, approbation of the 'good lady' who witnesses Margery's grief marks the wider applicability of the lesson underlying Margery's narration of the encounter. This good lady may see the tears as a token specifically of Margery's holiness, but in doing so she likewise instructs readers in the holiness of affective meditation, here carried out through the focus on a particular physical realization of the image of the Passion.

In this respect, the practices and experiences of medieval mystics mirror in key ways the communicative difficulties of affective narration. The experience of union with God, like the experience of feeling, is equally individualized and

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interiorized, making it exceptionally difficult to express in literal language. Medieval mystics often betray their own frustrations with, and skepticisms of, the communicative power of language, differentiating between physical and spiritual senses and even expressly forbidding the use of physical senses in contemplation and downplaying the ability of language to mediate the mystic’s connection with the divine. The Cloud of Unknowing, a Middle English theological text that asserts itself to be a contemplative work “in the whiche a soul is onydyd with God” — the elusive union at the heart of mysticism — repeatedly voices its author’s distrust of physical, sensory language, for fear that contemplatives should be led astray:

In this werk may a yong disciple, that hath not yit ben wel used and provid in goostly worching, ful lightly be disceyvid, and ... paraventure be distroied in his bodily mightes, and falle into fantasie in his goostly wittes. ... And in this maner may this disceite befalle. A yong man or womman, newe set to the scole of devotion, hereth this sorow and this desire be red and spokyn, how that a man schal lift up his herte unto God, and unseesingly desire for to fele the love of here God. And as fast in a curiousté of witte their conceyve thees wordes not goostly, as thei ben ment, bot fleschly and bodily, and travaylen theirre fleschly hertes outrageously in theirre brestes.

340 Rick MacDonald, “The Perils of Language in the Mysticism of Late Medieval England,” in Mystics Quarterly 34.3-4 (2008): 45-70. MacDonald explains, “Mystics who wished to instruct novices about contemplation acknowledged the difficulties inherent in accurately communicating God’s meaning to humankind. Communication becomes even more difficult when it involves mystics’ explication of their practices and experiences of union with God. Many medieval writers had an intensely nuanced and intellectual attitude toward the indeterminacy of language. While the distrust of language caused many to eschew attempts to describe their visions, others employed both sensual and sexual imagery in their attempt to do justice to their mystical experiences.” (45)


342 The Cloud of Unknowing, 72-73.
The Cloud’s author locates the source of this meditative self-deception firmly in reliance on one’s physical senses, which he (or she) disregards as “rude streynyges ... ful harde fastnid in fleschlines of bodely felyng, and ful drie fro any wetyng of grace.”

Yet for all of this inherent discomfort with language’s ability to convey the ineffable qualities of both mystic and affective experience, the Cloud’s author likewise resorts, just as Margery does for example, to imagery dependent on the experience of the physical senses. The Cloud, at the same time that it decries attempting mystic contemplation via the meditation of bodily imagery, nevertheless is reliant upon sensory imagery in order to impart the overarching conceit of its particular negative theology. As its author commands readers (in a direct contrast with the meditations of Julian’s Revelation, for example), not to contemplate creation, “the creatures that ever God maad and the werkes of hem,” the somewhat convoluted alternative the text offers is for the would-be contemplative instead to conceive of his or her inability to actually understand God via the metaphor of the titular cloud of unknowing, which “letteth thee that thou maist not see Him cleerly by light of understanding in thi reson ne fele Him in swetnes of love in thin

343 The Cloud of Unknowing, 73-74.

344 See for example, the assessment of Macdonald in “The Perils of Language.” Here, he argues: “With all his explicit distrust of earthly things and the fallen nature of humanity, Hilton still relies on sensory images, images that demand recourse to bodily and earthly resources for their meaning. In this particular description of how to limit earthly intrusions on meditation, Hilton employs images of sight, sound, and touch. ... The Cloud’s author is also forced to rely on evocative sensory images to describe the ethereal state of mind necessary for proper contemplation. ... Certain words evoke emotional and physical responses in listeners.” Macdonald, “The Perils of Language,” 57.
affection." This knowing ignorance is, the Cloud explains, a necessary condition of
the ability to achieve the union with God that is the purpose of the book—but one
which the text’s author, despite all exhortations away from the bodily senses,
nonetheless describes via the same physical senses as a union in which “schalt thou
fele Him or see Him.” The struggles the Cloud’s author faces in attempting to
express the inexpressible underscore the communicative necessity of the physical
senses, which makes sensory figurative language—visual, tactile, auditory—
essentially unavoidable, however much one might wish to communicate otherwise.

Moreover, this tendency to fall back on the expressive power of sensory
imagery often took on the language of not merely sensuality but specifically of
sexual union. Rick MacDonald observes:

Elizabeth Petroff finds similar concerns about the limitations of
language in the writings of continental mystics. Nevertheless,
she identifies a number of mystics who endorse the efficacy of
sensual language. Petroff explains that by, "using the language
of the body the medieval writers may be able to say unsayable
or unthinkable things" (204). The ineffability of the mystic’s
experience and her/his desire to convey that inexpressible
meaning sometimes, paradoxically, oblige the mystic to rely on
sensory and sensual imagery. ... some mystics find that
powerful emotional and erotic imagery (a very worldly and
physical language) most closely parallels their intense,
supernatural experiences. Many religious and secular writers,
however, recognized the difficulty of conveying powerful
emotions adequately. ... Additionally, Clarissa Atkinson asserts
that "writers in the affective tradition [like Rolle and Margery
Kempe] used the many varieties of human love to talk about
divine love and to stimulate the love of God in human beings"

345 The Cloud of Unknowing, 30-31.

346 The Cloud of Unknowing, 30-31.
In order to inspire their readers to adopt a more active prayer life, some religious writers tried to describe the delights of knowing God in the closest, clearest images their readers could be expected to understand. The frequency with which religious authors cast their mystical experiences in the terms of secular romance ought to suggest underlying philosophical links between religious and secular literature—at least, given the similarities in their language—yet the two are rarely discussed in relation, and the kinds of affective meditative reading enabled by mystical texts rarely sought in medieval romance. Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*, however, offers a particularly apt point of comparison from which to investigate the wider application of affective reading practices, as it, like medieval mystical treatises, relies on the habitual linking of affectivity and sensory imagery to convey the emotional depth of its narrative.

Before addressing these hermeneutic links, however, it is worth exploring the underpinnings of the links between interiority and metaphoric language’s expressive power. The ineffability of individual interiority which frustrated medieval authors is hardly a chronologically-determined or bounded phenomenon, and literal language is no more suited now to communicating immaterial experiences than it was in the Middle Ages. Nor is reliance on sensory—and sensual—language solely a medieval phenomenon. What makes this particular mode of figuration so widely applicable? At least some potential answers are found in psychological studies of metaphoric language, cognition, and affective processing,

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which suggest, first, that emotion is a crucial facet of narrative comprehension, and second, that metaphoric language is intrinsically tied to its comprehension. It is necessary, then to address briefly the history of modern neuro-psychological insights into the role of metaphor in affective consumption of fiction.

In fact, our experience of fiction is emotionally determined before we open a book. Even the process of selecting reading material is shaped by readers’ affective states; hedonic theories of selection demonstrate significant evidence of mood management playing a central role in what we read: generally readers who self-report—or are cued to experience—negative moods will select reading that they perceive has the potential to positively influence their affective states, while readers who self-report feeling positive emotions will select books that will maintain those moods.348 Even the consumption of seemingly sad texts adheres to this theory, and is likewise affected by readers’ perceptions of both a given text and their anticipated emotional experience on reading it: readers of fiction without positive endings report nonetheless enjoying it, and their enjoyment of the text is visibly tied to their emotional experience, such that the sadder a story, the more readers report enjoying it.349 Reading, whether consciously so or not, is an inherently emotionally driven enterprise. While it is somewhat more difficult to assert equivalent selection criteria for medieval readers—most of whom had far fewer books to choose from in


the first place, or may have encountered texts in a situation in which they have less choice over their reading material, as when listening to a narrative read aloud in public, for example. Yet we should not discount the reminder that reading—the choice to read anything in the first place, regardless of narrow selection of reading materials—is inherently shaped by readers’ affective states, and by the feelings they anticipate experiencing as a result of their time spent with a book.

What role, then, does metaphoric language play in mediating this experience once one selects a text to read? Metaphor is, first, recognized by linguists as an “important tool of cognition and communication, providing us with unfamiliar ways of conceptualizing unfamiliar things.” The communication of feeling, then, may in fact be one of its primary functions. When asked to describe affective states, people generally resort to the use of descriptive metaphor; moreover, the more intense the emotion they are asked to describe, the more likely they are to fall on metaphoric language as a sort of expressive crutch, which psychologists interpret as evidence that metaphoric language is a specifically vivid form of description and means of communication. Figurative language, therefore, communicates at least some descriptive or intellectual understanding of emotion; it makes concrete,


351 Fainsilber and Ortony suggest that their studies of metaphor's role in mediating affective comprehension can be "interpreted as supporting the hypothesis that an important function of metaphoric language is to permit the expression of that which is difficult to express using literal language alone." Fainsilber and Ortony, "Metaphorical Uses of Language," 239.

352 Fainsilber and Ortony, “Metaphorical Uses of Language,” 239.
perceptible, that which has no discernible physical form unto itself. We can elucidate two further important points from psychologists’ studies on emotion and fictional narrative: one, that vision—vision-processing, and vision-based sensory language—offer particularly communicative avenues of expression, and two, that this language specifically enables not merely the description, but also the experience, of emotion. The vividness hypothesis offers some means of explaining why authors like the Cloud of Unknowing author, for all their distrust of bodily, versus ghostly, senses, nevertheless fall back upon metaphors and verbs of seeing, hearing, feeling; the union they attempt to describe is at once intensely vivid and uniquely personal, making figurative language crucial to any attempt to share the experience with others.

Although this figurative language is of course a crucial component of communicating information which humans would, in praxis, acquire through dynamic, audio-visual and tactile experiences of the world, it is particularly tied to the conveyance of feeling. Moreover, audio-visual processing in particular has been shown to establish significant affective proximity to narrative fiction.\textsuperscript{353} Comparative studies of the cognitive processes involved in the comprehension of text versus that of audio-visual media demonstrate that readers have “more control over emotional distance than viewers [e.g. of film and television].”\textsuperscript{354} Intuitively, this makes sense: presented only with symbolic—linguistic—representation of

\[\text{\textsuperscript{353} Mar et. al., “Emotion and narrative fiction,” 821-822.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{354} Mar et. al., “Emotion and narrative fiction,” 821.}\]

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narrative detail, readers must imagine for themselves what a scene, a character, a particular event looks and sounds like, meaning that they may do so in the fashion, and to the degree, that they choose; when actually seeing what an author (or filmmaker) wants them to, viewers have far less choice in how they interpret the text. This representational control in turn influences affective reactions to the text.355

This emotional distance—or lack thereof—is key to driving readers’ emotional processing of the narrative, particularly self-reflective and meditative affective engagement. Psychologists identify multiple different types of emotions associated with reading narrative. Those at the greatest emotional distance from the text are aesthetic emotions—those that involve the appreciation of a story’s characteristics or craft. Closer interaction with the text evokes narrative emotions, those feelings which are experienced when closing the distance between reader and text and “entering the narrative world of a story.”356 These feelings include, at the closest end of the spectrum, sympathetic emotions, emotions of empathy, emotions of identification, and remembered emotions.357 These final two—emotions of identification and remembered emotions—are associated with the greatest degrees of feeling on the part of the reader. When signaled, for example, to imagine what a protagonist might feel during particular points of the narrative—just as both


Chaucer and H4’s glossator do with the conceit of the lark caught in a hawk’s claws—readers are more likely to experience “fresh emotions,” with closer aesthetic emotional distance inspiring greater intensity of feeling in the reader.\textsuperscript{358}

Remembered emotions, which narrow the gap between text and reader a step further, involve readers reliving their own related experiences, and are “most often invoked by reading passages that were descriptively dense ... [which] helped the reader create a richly imagined model of an evocative situation or scene, prompting personal recollections emotional in nature” and are identified by psychologists as “most likely to spur introspection, reflection and personal insight.”\textsuperscript{359} The more descriptive, particularly the more visually rich, a reader’s picture of narrative scenes, then, the closer the reader’s affective distance from the text; the narrower this affective divide, the more likely readers are to experience deeper emotions for themselves and to engage in further contemplation inspired by that affective experience. Thus for a medieval mystic, viewing detailed images of the lives of the Holy Family, for example, inspires more intense engagement with the narrative and deeper contemplation and prayer. Affective theologians were clearly onto something big.

It is not surprising, then, that medieval mystics and authors of affective religious texts should resort so often to sensory language, even when they resolutely disavow its use. Margery’s extensive reliving of the crucifixion is, for example, far

\textsuperscript{358} Mar et. al., “Emotion and narrative fiction,” 823.

from her sole use of densely vivid visual description. The first vision which the
would-be saint recounts is a vision of Christ, described in strikingly physical details,
and which foregrounds vision as the sense most fruitfully communicative of author’s
subjective experience:

Jhesu ... aperyd to hys creatur, whych had forsaken hym, in
lyknesse of a man, most semly, most bewtuows, and most
amyable that evyr myght be seen wyth mannys eye, clad in a
mantyl of purpyl sylke, syttynge upon hir beddes syde.
[emphasis mine].

The scene itself is simple, yet the degree of description surprisingly detailed: Christ
does not merely appear, but he takes specific physical form—the ‘lyknesse’ or visible
appearance of a man—and occupies a specific position, sitting at Margery’s
bedside. He is dressed in a particular fashion, wearing rich purple robes, and is
physically attractive—‘semly’ and ‘bewtuows’, both adjectives that denote a quality
pleasing to the eye. Over the course of her Booke, Margery visually experiences
the pregnancy of Saint Anne and the births of Mary and St. John the Baptist, a
vision of the Virgin, the fluttering of the Host at Mass, another vision of Christ,


361 “lyknesse”, The Middle English Dictionary, last modified April 24, 2013,
http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/, (accessed April 4, 2015).

362 “semly,” The Middle English Dictionary, last modified April 24, 2013,
http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/, (accessed April 4, 2015); and “bewtuows,” The Middle English
Dictionary, last modified April 24, 2013, http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/, (accessed April 4,
2015).

363 Kempe, The Book of Margery Kempe, 406-409

364 Kempe, The Book of Margery Kempe, 34

365 Kempe, The Book of Margery Kempe, 57-58.
Mary, and the joys of Heaven,\textsuperscript{366} her own marriage to Christ in Heaven,\textsuperscript{367} a conversation with Saint Jerome,\textsuperscript{368} the deaths of both Christ and Mary,\textsuperscript{369} and meditative visions of the wounds of Christ’s Passion, Christ as an infant, and an angel showing her a book with the Trinity depicted in gold—underneath which Margery wishes her own name to be written, both strikingly physical details.\textsuperscript{370} Though Margery does clarify that these visions are seen with the ghostly senses, rather than the bodily,\textsuperscript{371} her spiritual experiences are recounted in terms that are impressively—both in their specificity and their frequency—visually oriented.

Julian of Norwich, too, is careful to distinguish between spiritual and bodily vision, but nonetheless falls back on visually oriented language through the metaphor of the tiny hazelnut in order to convey to her readers the depth of God’s love for all of creation:

> In this same time that I saw this sight of the head bleeding, our good lord shewed a ghostly sight of his homely loving. I saw that he is to us all thing that is good and comfortable to our helpe. He is oure clothing, that for love wrappeth us and windeth us, halseth us and becloseth us, hangeth about us for tender love, that he may never leeve us. And so in this sight I saw that he is all thing that is good, as to my understanding.

\textsuperscript{366} Kempe, \textit{The Book of Margery Kempe}, 58-62.

\textsuperscript{367} Kempe, \textit{The Book of Margery Kempe}, 91-94.

\textsuperscript{368} Kempe, \textit{The Book of Margery Kempe}, 102-03.

\textsuperscript{369} Kempe, \textit{The Book of Margery Kempe},167-69.

\textsuperscript{370} Kempe, \textit{The Book of Margery Kempe}, 195-97.

\textsuperscript{371} Kempe, \textit{The Book of Margery Kempe}, 179-82.
And in this, he shewed a little thing the quantity of an haselnot, lying in the palme of my hand as me semide, and it was as rounde as any balle. I looked therean with the eye of my understanding, and thought: 'what may this be?' And it was answered generally thus: 'It is all that is made.’ I marvelled how it might laste, for methought it might sodenly have fallen to nought for littleness. [emphasis mine]³⁷²

Julian’s vision is as predicated as Margery’s on the narration of physical descriptive detail. Yet it is the more striking for its repetition of verbs of visual perception, an refrain of “I saw ... I saw ... I saw” a refrain which clearly emphasizes the vivid visual language in which Julian’s theology is cast. Indeed, even as the Cloud author denies the contemplative power of the bodily senses, they too fall into the trap of relying on verbs of visual perception, as the text’s second chapter, its “steryng ... to the werk of this book” instructs readers to “Look up now, weike wreche, and see what thou art.” “Look now forwardes, and alt be bacwardes. And see what thee faileth, and

³⁷² Julian of Norwich, Revelation, V.1-11. This vision, spread out over two chapters in the Vision Showed to a Devout Woman, still relies upon verbs of seeing, though as its retelling is shorter, it fails to realize the same iterative linguistic quality: “In this, God brought oure ladye to mine understandinge. I sawe hir gastelye in bodilye lykenes, a simpilie maidene and a meeke, yonge of age, in the stature that she was when sho conceivevede.” (IV.21-23) “In this sight I sawe sothfastlye that sho is more than alle that God made benethe hir in worthines and in fulhede. For abovene his is nothinge that is made botte the blissede manhede of Criste. This litille thinge that es made that es benethe oure ladye Saint Marye, God shewed unto me als litille as it hadde beene a haselle notte. Methought it might hafe fallene for litille. In this blissede revelation God shewed me thre noughtes, or whilke noughtes this is the first that was shewed me. Of this nedes ilke man and woman to hafe knowinge that desires to lyeve contemplatifelye, that him like to nought alle thinge that es made for to hafe the love of God that es unmade.” (IV.30-39) “In this firste shewinge of oure lorde I sawe sex thignes in mine understandinge. The furst is the takes of his blisfull passion and the plenteous shedinge of his precious blode. The seconde is the maidene, that she is his dereworthy modere. ... The ferthe is alle thinge that he has made. For wele I woote that heven and erth and alle that is made is mekille and faire and large and goode. Botte the cause why it shewed so litille to my sight was for I sawe itte in the presence of him that es makere. For to a saule that sees the makere of alle thinge, alle that es made semes full litille.” (V.4-12). Julian of Norwich, A Vision Showed to a Devout Woman, in The Writings of Julian of Norwich, edited by Nicholas Watson and Jacqueline Jenkins (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 2005), 61-120.
not what thou haste [emphasis mine].”\textsuperscript{373} Even as vision is considered suspect, fallible, it remains the primary mode of expressing the inexpressible and consequentially, the linguistic method through which the excitative mode of speaking functions, narrowing affective distance between reader and text, and inspiring introspection and prayer.

It should come as no surprise, then, that Chaucer would rely on similar figurative strategies, or that his readers might approach a narrative romance with similar reading praxis as that which they might bring to texts of affective theology. Yet the conceptual divide between sacred and secular maintains a hold on modern reception and conception of vernacular reading practices, and the affective literacies of vernacular theology are rarely if ever associated with narrative fiction.

The \textit{materia} of \textit{Troilus} offers Chaucer broad scope to exercise his readers’ sympathetic faculties in similar fashion, as his protagonists experience the ecstasy of love and the agony of separation and betrayal, though the poet himself expresses reservations about the ability of his language to convey the true experience of emotion, asking:

\begin{quote}
Hou myht it euer Ired be or Isonge
The pleynt that she made in hir distresse
I not but as for me my litil tonge
Yif I discryuen wolde hir heuynesse
It shulde make hir sorwe to seme lesse
Than that it was...\textsuperscript{374}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{373} \textit{The Cloud of Unknowing}, 29-20.

\textsuperscript{374} Harley 2392 fol. 98v; IV.799-805.
Conventional as Chaucer’s expression of poetic or linguistic inability is, this passage nevertheless underscores a truth of expression: that description can at best approximate the lived truth of the intangibilities of human experience. Even if not legitimately doubting the communicative power of his verse, the poet acknowledges the need to look elsewhere, beyond his ability to recount her lament or simply ‘discryuen’ hir sorrow. For the poet, that solution lies at least in part in the figurative abilities of metaphoric expression.

At certain deeply intimate or pathetic moments in the text, the poet calls upon figurative explication—often via natural imagery—of a visual aspect of the scene in order to convey the underlying sentiment; as Troilus and Criseyde’s embrace is compared to honeysuckle twining around a hazel tree in Book III, so too does Chaucer approach the depiction of the broad range of human emotions. The lovers’ impending separation in Book IV sets off a torrent of weeping and commiseration among the characters. Greek emissaries broker a trade for Antenor, Criseyde is included in the bargain, and Troilus (like any good romantic hero) responds by going home to throw himself despondently on his bed and grieve alone. Where exposition alone would fall expressively short, Chaucer employs an extensive conceit in which the desolate lover is compared to a tree stripped bare by winter and wrapped bark—itsels aligned with his suffering—and to a wounded wild animal:

And as in wyntre leues ben bireift,
Ech aftir other, til the tre be bare,
So that they nys but bark and branche ilaft,
Lith Troilus, Iraft of ech weelfare,
Ibounden in the blak bark of care,
Disposed wod out of his wit to breide.

...................................

Right as the wilde bole begynneth to sprynge,
Now heer, now ther, Idarted to the herte,
And of his deth rerith in compleynynge,
Riht so gan he about the chambre sterte.375

What exposition cannot convey, Chaucer's figurative language can: an abstract interiority is rendered observable and quantifiable as natural phenomena.376

However, unlike the briefer contemplations on the lovers' appearance, or Criseyde's despair, the extensive conceit of Troilus' maddened grief dilates the scene's—and the reader's—focus on the this suffering. Narrative progress is suspended in favor of detailed elaboration on Troilus' affective state, expressed in concrete, perceptible imagery.

375 Harley 2392, fol. 88v.; IV.225-242.

376 In addition to the Book III honeysuckle imagery and the above conceit, also IV.770, where Criseyde adopts natural language in order to express her own discontent, figuring herself as a fish out of water and an uprooted plant which must by natural necessity wither: “To what fynde sholde I lyue and sorwen thus? / How sholde a fish withouten water dure? / What is Criseyde worth from Troilus? / How sholde a plaunte or lyues creature / Lyue with-outen his kynde noriture? / For which ful ofte a byword here I seye, / That rooteles most grene soone deye”", a passage that is also glossed in H4, with "nota" (fol 98r.). It is worth noting, as well, that Chaucer uses similarly expressive language to convey other facets of emotionality: Troilus is distilled into tears “as licour out of a lambyc” (IV.520); Criseyde's tears fall “as shour in Aperil ful swithe” (IV.751); both Troilus and Criseyde weep tears as bitter “as is ligne aloes or galle” (IV.37), all metaphoric elaborations on an already outward sign of interiority. Emotion is conveyed apophatically through similar metaphor: Troilus declares that he must be “transmewen in a ston” before his suffering can be relieved (IV.467). These passages do not appear to attract the attention of the glossator; however, neither do they quite particularize or visualize the more ineffable abstractions of emotional experience. The one passage that comes closest to offering readers further illustration, Troilus' lyrical address to Criseyde's empty house, in which he compares its literal darkness and desolation to his own (V.540-553); this passage earns a laconic "nota bene" from the glossator.
In H4, this passage is accompanied by the Latin gloss “nota disposiconex Troili pro amore Cresseid”. The gloss itself stresses not precisely the fact of Troilus’ response, but the mode of its expression, the stylistic arrangement of its conveyance. Akin to the note calling attention to the lovers’ appearance, its comparison to the symbiotic embrace of the honeysuckle and hazel, the gloss asks readers to suspend their perusal of the text and attend to the visually imaginative method of expressing the abstract state of Troilus’ grief. The emphasis of the gloss offers readers the tools to picture vividly and participate imaginatively the experience of love’s sorrows: a set of images through which they can concretize and comprehend the ineffable affective.

H4’s approach can be contrasted with a second manuscript of the poem, whose glosses likewise shape a reading of the poem rooted in its affective content. Bodleian MS Rawlinson Poet. 163 (hereafter R), is a fifteenth-century copy of Troilus and Criseyde and Chaucer’s Rosemounde, written in four different hands, with extensive glossing in both Middle English and Latin. The English glosses, which offer brief summaries of specific points in the narrative, direct textual comprehension by prioritizing particular passages and identifying their import for any reader who looks to the margins for interpretive guidance. Textual comprehension, at the literal level, is intrinsically as much a question of the events of narrative as much as of what they signify; the narrative summary glosses act as a

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377 Harley 2392 fol. 88v. The ‘z’ in “disposiconex” appears clearly to be a ‘z’, but grammatically might well be amended to an ‘m’—and indeed, it is likely a stretch to suggest, but it could be possible to interpret it as a sideways ‘m’ or other particular scribal method of indicating the expected accusative ending.
sort of running commentary explaining the progression of the plot. In R, the English glossator selectively summarizes the narrative in a way that frames the poem almost entirely in emotional terms.\footnote{378}

The marginalia in the first two books of the poem appear to reinforce a relatively conventional reading of the poem, calling readers’ attention to the early milestones of the lovers’ first interactions. They are, however, rendered specifically (and almost entirely) in terms of the affective nature of the narrative—in contrast another example of more extensive summary glossing, Bodleian MS Arch. Selden B. (S1). A few notes from each should illustrate the difference: as Troilus, after scorning Love and his followers, looks across the crowd at the Palladium, he catches sight of Crisseyde and is immediately struck by Cupid’s dart. The glossator of S1 observes, “her’ troylus saw <f>irst his lady.”\footnote{379} The English glosses in R note, specifically, that the text narrates “How Troilus was suppysed of the loue of Cressye-de.”\footnote{380} Where R narrates the course of the poem’s progression, it phrases it,

\footnote{378} Specifically, the glossator at work in R, the height of whose ambitions appear to rest on reshaping a reading of Troilus framed not as the “double sorrow” of Troilus’ foolhardy love and eventual betrayal, but as the valorization of the lovers’ affair in which the eventual tragic ending is elided in favor of a more ambiguous conclusion allowing for the possibility of Crisseyde’s enduring fidelity. The narrative summary glosses call repeated attention to Crisseyde’s oft-mentioned and emphatic disinterest in Diomede’s advances, before engaging in a series of equivocal readings of Crisseyde’s new ‘trouthe’ to Diomede that acknowledge none of the deeper implications of the relationship’s emotional or sexual character. Finally, where Crisseyde’s betrayal is no longer deniable, the summary glosses end abruptly, as though the glossator, realizing the futility of trying to impose a happier ending on the poem, throws up his or her hands in frustration and abandons the enterprise entirely.

\footnote{379} Benson and Windeatt, “Glosses,” 36.

\footnote{380} Benson and Windeatt, “Glosses,” 36.
with little deviation, in an explicitly affective context; its significant intervention is
predicated on the glosses’ treatment of the final book of *Troilus*.

Book V begins with Criseyde’s departure from Troy and Diomede’s resolution
to take her as a paramour. The narrative summary glosses in R pick up from the
beginning of the book, noting Criseyde’s departure from the city, Troilus’ grief,
and—most importantly for the manuscript’s re-shaping of the narrative—her
absolute and repeated denial of Diomede’s advances while clearing identifying her
suitor as the aggressor. Over the span of 300 lines, Diomede applies himself to
repeated attempts to solicit her romantic favor, each of which R’s glossator marks:

How diomed cast hym on A nyght’ fully to requere Cressseyd of
hyr loue

How diomede bysoght’ inwardly Cresseyde of loue nota

How eft again diomede spak to Cresseyd & prayed hyr’ of loue
[...]  

Each time Chaucer returns readers’ attention to Diomede, the glossator of R
reminds them that he is repeatedly and aggressively pursuing her affections.
Likewise, the glossator of R expressly underscores the unrequited nature of
Diomede’s pursuit: his initial attempt is rebuffed, and the glossator notes, “How
Cresseyd answerd diomede nothyng to hys purpos but thanked hym of hys

381 Benson and Windeatt, “Glosses,” 50; at “This Diomede, of whom yow telle I gan” (V.771).
382 Benson and Windeatt, “Glosses,” 51; at “But for to tellen forth of Diomede” (V.841).
383 Benson and Windeatt, “Glosses,” 51; at “The mowen com, and gostly for to speke, / This
Diomede is come unto Criseyde” (V.1031-1031).
and “How Cresseyd Graunted diomed to speke wt hym on the morowe so he wold nat touch to hyr of loue & what she sayd to hym.” Here, as the narrative of Book V takes a crucial turn, and Criseyde begins to accept Diomede’s advances, R’s glossator embarks upon a carefully literal and equivocal rendering of the story, splitting narrative hairs so that the marginalia cover the events of the poem but without acknowledging their deeper significance. Diomede returns to speak with Criseyde again, and she finally grants him a number of gifts: her sleeve, a bay horse, and most importantly, a brooch that had been Troilus’, but never, explicitly, her heart: “How eft again diomede spak to Cresseyd & prayed hyr’ of loue so ferforth that she gaf hym a stede & a broch whych was troilus & made hym were a pencel of hyr sleue”.

Here the glossator takes exceptionally literally Chaucer’s professed ignorance as to the exact moment at which Criseyde betrays her love for Troilus, glossing only the material gifts and ignoring the possibility, alluded to two stanzas later, that “men seyn— I not—that she yaf hym hire herte” (V.1050).

We might contrast this with H4’s approach to the same roughly 300 lines. Here, the glossator engages in a series of notae addressing Criseyde’s regret at leaving Troy, as she gazes on the city from the Greek camp, and which I reproduce here in full:

384 Benson and Windeatt, “Glosses,” 49; at “Criseyde unto that purpos lite answerede / As she that was with sorwe oppressed so” (V.176-177).

385 Benson and Windeatt, “Glosses,” 51; at “What sholde I telle his wordes that he seyde? / He spak inough for o day at the meest” (V.946-947).

386 Benson and Windeatt, “Glosses,” 51; at V.1030. Here, at V.1038, H4 simply observes, “nota de donis .c.d”. British Library, MS Harley 2392, fol. 131r.
Ful rewfull she loked upon Troie,
Biheld the toures heigh and ek the halles;
‘Allas,’ quod she, ‘the plesance and the joie,
The which that now al torned into galle is,
Have ich had ofte withinne yonder walles!
O Troilus, what dostow now?’ she seyde.
‘Lord wheyther thow yet thenke upon Criseyde?

‘Allas, I ne hadde trowed on youre loore
And went with yow, as ye me redder er this!
Than hadde I now nat siked half so soore.
Who myghte han seyd that I hadde don amys
To stele awey with swich oon as he ys?
But al to late comth the letuarie
What man to cors unto the grave carie.

To late is now to speke of that mater.
Prudence, alas, oon of thyne eyen thre
Me lakked alwey, er that I come here!
On tyme ypassed wel remembred me,
And present tyme ek koud ich wel ise,
But future tyme, er I was in the snare,
Koude I nat sen, that causeth now my care.’387

In this passage, we see Chaucer once more cast affective experience in expressly visual terms. Criseyde's meditative regret grows from her view of Troy—which she both ‘loked upon’ and ‘biheld’—and Chaucer recounts some architectural detail of that sight for readers. As Criseyde's mournful soliloquy reaches its pinnacle, the poet's language becomes overtly visually-oriented, centering on the conceit of Prudence’s three eyes, which look simultaneously to the past, present, and future. Indeed, vision—or the lack thereof, is precisely Criseyde’s problem; the root of her woe her inability to fully perceive—she notes that she could “ise,” see, the present, but was unable to “sen” the future until it was too late to change her course of

387 British Library, MS Harley 2392, 125v.; V.729-749.
action. Here, H4’s scribe glosses the motif, observing, “nota tempore presenti preterit’ & futuro”,\footnote{388} the ocular conceit—that is, the objects of Prudence’s vision—that mediates readers’ perception and understanding of Criseyde’s grief and regret. In place of R’s narrative re-casting, H4 draws readers back into the mode of expression in which Criseyde’s interiority is couched, and through which, it can perhaps be felt.

R’s English glossator has, by this point in the narrative, been forced to engage in a rather delicate dance around the growing unsavoriness of Criseyde’s character; when faced with the poem’s undeniably unhappy conclusion, the glosses switch from semantic hair-splitting to unqualified denial of the text’s narrative. Criseyde, as readers already expect, fails to return to Troy at the appointed time, and Troilus begins to worry. His anxiety culminates in a dream, in which he beholds his lady embracing a boar, and concludes, upon waking, that she has betrayed him. The glossator acknowledges this passage, “How troilus dremed of Cresseyd & told it vnto pandar & seyde hys lady hym had betrayed.”\footnote{389} The marginalia proceed immediately, however, to counter the dream’s implications, emphasizing Pandarus’ advice that his friend not give credence to his dreams, and offering readers a rejection, from within the story, of the only indication which the glosses acknowledge that Criseyde has been untrue. Here, a final—excepting a rhetorical

\footnote{388} British Library, MS Harley 2392, fol 125v.; V.746.

\footnote{389} Benson and Windeatt, “Glosses,” 52; at (V.1234).

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division marker at the “The lettre of Cresseyd”\textsuperscript{390}—gloss at Pandarus’ extensive counsel not to give the dream any credence. Here, the glossator of R notes, “How pandar told vnto Troilus he shuld now leeu<e> on dremes but bad hym wryte vnto hir a lettre,”\textsuperscript{391} refusing to foreclose the question of Criseyde’s shifting affections by leaving readers—those following the narrative as reshaped by its summary glosses—with the hope that the betrayal Troilus’ dream portends may not come to pass, and the confusion may be cleared up by reestablishing epistolary communication.

In the poem itself, of course, we know that Troilus goes on to receive far clearer proof of her infidelity, seeing for himself the gifts Criseyde has given her new lover. We know, likewise, that he is killed in battle at the conclusion of the narrative. The English glossator of R, however, does not acknowledge these significant developments in the marginalia; rather, the annotation in which Pandarus tells Troilus—and the readers, likewise—not to believe in dreams is the last narrative summary gloss, though the poem itself proceeds almost 600 lines further. The lack of marginal attention suggests a reading of the text eliding the unhappier aspects of the narrative—or at least, one that refuses to prioritize them as it has the plot points that the glossator deems worthy of annotation. Moreover, by rejecting the final acknowledgment that the story ends badly, the glossator at the least, takes an implicit stand on the poem’s significance, in this case the expression

\footnote{\textsuperscript{390}Benson and Windeatt, “Glosses,” 52; at V.1590.}

\footnote{\textsuperscript{391}Benson and Windeatt, “Glosses,” 52; at V.1275.}
and potentially the approbation of the feeling at the heart (as it were) of the poem, and at most, offering readers an alternate textual experience.

H4 navigates the change in Criseyde’s affections differently, ultimately evincing not frustration with the narrative’s ending, but rather vested interest in encouraging empathy with Criseyde’s predicament. Of the manuscripts of *Troilus*, H4 is alone in drawing attention via its marginal apparatus to the external factors which make it virtually impossible for Criseyde to safely leave the Greek camps and return to Troy, spurring her final acceptance of Diomede’s advances. At V.1026, Chaucer explains that, much as Criseyde had weighed Troilus’ finer qualities against her independence before embarking upon their relationship, so too does she consider her new suitor:
TABLE 5.1

HARLEY 2392 FOL. 130V.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retornyng in hire soule ay vp and down</th>
<th>The wordes of this sodeyn Diomede</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>His grete estat, and perel of the town,</td>
<td>causa &amp; periculum atque concessio amoris cressaid' diomed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And that she was allone and hadde nede</td>
<td>Of frendes help; and thus bygan to brede</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cause whi, the sothe forto telle,</td>
<td>That she took fully purpos forto dwelle.\textsuperscript{392}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{392} British Library, MS Harley 2392, fol. 130v.; V.1023-1029.
Criseyde’s reasons for accepting Diomede’s advances are actually quite varied, and indicate that she is at least partially persuaded by his charms (and estate), and not solely by the dangerous and friendless position in which she currently finds herself. H4’s glossator, however, emphasizes those latter reasons, which attend to her decision’s affective dynamic, and in particular, her ostensible loneliness and the underlying fact that she is, as an outsider in the Greek camp, in a tenuous political position fraught with legitimate danger. This strategy returns readers to the same sort of exercise in empathetic reading illustrated in the annotations’ interactions with the “exemplum alaude” at III.1191-1192. Just as that textual exchange asks readers to consider the interior experience of a bird, caught in the talons of a predator, so here does the emphasis on the danger of Criseyde’s circumstances underscore both the importance of her affective experience—once more one of fear—and ask readers to understand it as a significant motivating factor in the narrative’s dénouement.

Moreover, this is followed by a second gloss urging readers to recall the difficulty Criseyde herself feels in electing, finally, not to return to Troy, and Troilus. Chaucer observes (before shifting his tone to censure both women in general and Criseyde in particular), that the decision is a painful and fraught one for his heroine.

But trewely, the storie telleth us,
Ther made nevere womman moore wo
Than she, whan that she falsed Troilus. in langore .c. dimisit fidem dolendo

H4’s scribe concentrates once more not on the narrative fact of Criseyde’s now-clear betrayal, but on two particular qualities of Criseyde’s disposition: that, one, she
breaks her faith “in langore”\textsuperscript{393}—in some ambiguous state of weakness or faintness—and two, that she does so “dolendo,” in a way which must of necessity cause sorrow or grief. The gloss is ambiguous on multiple counts, and in ways which, I think, invite deeper contemplation of the passage’s affective dynamics—particularly as these ambiguities coalesce around the two Latin phrases attempting to capture and convey this interiority. First, what, we are left to wonder, is the nature of the ‘languor’ ascribed to Criseyde: is it meant to hearken back to, and remind readers of, the precariousness of her social position and safety in the Greek camp, a literal weakness with respect to resources or the ability to protect herself? Is it perhaps rather a judgment of her moral fiber, her inability to remain strong in the face of difficult circumstances? A representation of depression, emotional enervation through its physical counterpart? This detail, the nature of the “langore” in which Criseyde finds herself has no parallel in the English verse, and readers following the marginal cues of the glosses find themselves now in a position in which they must, in order to answer this puzzle, attempt some hypothetical consideration of Criseyde’s position and her feelings.

The second interpretive crux, the “dolendo,” similarly demands that readers engage in an act of hypothetical empathy in order to interpret the Latin diction. The Middle English text appears to indicate that Criseyde herself feels—or at least evinces—sorrow, here. The Latin is more vague: the passive gerundive leaves more

\textsuperscript{393} Though Karma Lochrie’s Margery Kempe and Translations of the Flesh (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 216, offers another in one instance of the phrase “in amore languore”, translated as “the yearning [languor] of love,” and an intriguing alternate usage, if not one likely to be supported in Troilus, insofar as its text suggests.
open the question of who is experiencing the sorrow. Grief might perhaps of
necessity be caused by the turn of events in the English text, its sufferers themselves
undefined; perhaps still more specifically, the masculine singular ending suggests
that the focus of the suffering with which the scribe is now concerned is in fact
Troilus, and not the expressions of grief and regret outlined in the corresponding
English verse. The readers here must once more judge for themselves: do they
imagine Criseyde’s sorrow to be sincere? Or do they perhaps align the sentiment of
the gloss more closely with Troilus’ feelings? This meditative exercise, begun by the
grammar of the Latin gloss, asks readers to enter into the imagined subjectivities of
the poem’s protagonists, rather than attempting simply to shape the progression of
the narrative as the annotations in R do.

The marginalia in R, for all their abiding concern with the poem’s affective
narrative, do not appear to foster the same affective-mimetic reading practices
represented in and enabled by H4, and this contrast serves to underscore those
qualities in the later manuscript. Where the Harley manuscript’s Latin glosses
evince their own iterative emotional character, rooted in that of the poem itself,
which ask readers’ close, almost meditative, consideration of the feelings at the core
of Troilus and Criseyde’s interactions, often by dwelling on the imagery/figurative
language in which Chaucer conveys these feelings, R demonstrates little interest in
this imagery. Here, we might return to the passage from Book IV, quoted above, in
which Troilus is compared, in his agony at Criseyde’s impending departure, to a wild
animal and a tree stripped of its leaves in winter. The two glossators’
methodological differences are clearly contrasted in each manuscript’s approach to
this frenzied despair at IV.225-242. H4 marks the language of the passage, instructing the reader to “nota disposicionez troili pro amore cressaid”; the emphasis is placed not simply on the fact of Troilus’ sadness, but on the manner in which, at the micro-level, Troilus expresses his grief, and in a larger sense, in which Chaucer makes the abstract feeling tangible to his audience. S1 and R gloss this passage as well, but they do so in a markedly different manner. S1 simply accompanies the passage with the relatively laconic, “<h>ere maketh troylus his compleynte vpon fortune.” In R, the passage is bracketed by a pair of narrative summaries; preceding the scene of Troilus’ grief, the glossator informs readers that they will now read about “How troylus beyng present in parlement it was finally apoynted that Cresseyd shuld be deliueryd in eschaunge [for] Anthenor & how Troylus [solo] sorweth forthy.” The passage is clearly set up as one that is concerned with Troilus’ reaction, but solely with brief exposition of what the reaction is, and not with the vehicle of its expression. Chaucer’s elaborate description leads into Troilus giving vent to his frustrations with Fortune, and here, again, the glossator of R includes a narrative summary that underscores the existence of his feelings, but pays no regard to their disposicio, noting, “How whan aswaged was sum of troylus sorowe he axed fortune why he wold depriuen hym of

394 IV.230, British Library, MS Harley 2392, fo. 88v.


396 IV.211; Benson and Windeatt, “Glosses,” 46.
hys ioye.” The contrast between these two glossators’ treatment of the same passage neatly underscores their functional differences: where R tells readers what the emotion is, H4 attempts to convey what it is like.

5.3 Presence Culture and the Emotional Reader

“‘Oh, that!’ Thomas smiled tolerantly. ‘That’s just father’s fun. And who says you always have to understand things? You can like them without understanding them—like ‘em better sometimes.’”

-Dodie Smith, I Capture the Castle

Dodie Smith’s I Capture the Castle acknowledges a truth about literature—both modern and medieval—that, while downplayed by literary criticism, is nonetheless true of its readers: that the relationship between text and reader is not purely hermeneutic. Smith’s erstwhile author, the “father” in question, is a sort of proto-Joyce, the forerunner of the difficulty—bordering on incomprehensibility—often associated with modern literature. Thomas’s off-hand defense of his father’s book, to a sister who has always struggled to understand it, reminds her—and us—that reading literature is more than mining the text for information; it offers readers (and authors) enjoyment. It is equally something to be understood, and something that may simply be liked.

The underlying reality of Smith’s idea of literature shies away from the ascendency, in literary scholarship, of focusing on interpretation, and more

397 IV.260; Benson and Windeatt, “Glosses,” 46.

specifically, the primacy assigned to medieval theories of literary engagement which privilege the text as a site of ethical instruction. Smith, rather, appears to visualize literature as something that operates along an axis not only of meaning, but also one of what Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht calls “presence.” For Gumbrecht, presence, in literature, suggests a spatial, material, and physical reality underlying the text, where its form, the sign of the individual word, corresponds not to a metaphysical reality that is the exclusive provenance of readers’ intellectual faculties, but to a substantial reality.

Gumbrecht’s concept of ‘presence’ offers us a way into understanding the marginalia in H4 and R. To Gumbrecht, medieval culture is a presence culture par excellence and its defining belief in the Eucharist, illustrative of a mentality that embraces not a metaphysical concept behind the sign of the host, but a real physical presence in which the ‘est’ of ‘hoc est corpus meum’ is meant quite literally. In such a culture, by looking solely at what literature could mean to readers, we bypass the dynamics of the reader-text nexus that fall outside the domain of hermeneutic

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400 Gumbrecht, Production of Presence, 53-54. This revitalization of substance, in the face of its criticism in the face of academe’s intense belief in the value of constructivism, and the ability to escape metaphysics, is essentially the main thrust of what Gumbrecht hopes a turn to presence will offer literary critics. He notes, with some wry humor, that he imagines he will open himself up to charges of naïveté, or of being ‘substantialist.’ Nevertheless, his arguments, even if marked by some naïveté, offer a useful lens for understanding readers like the one responsible for the marginalia in H4, who seems occupied with something in the text beyond its deeper meaning.

401 Gumbrecht, Production of Presence, 28-29. Of course, despite the utility of the Eucharist—particularly as it is understood in the doctrine of transubstantiation—as a means of figuring Gumbrecht’s concept of “presence,” this explication elides the real historic complexities of medieval thought on the Eucharist, which more often than not proved challenging to medieval theology.
study. Beyond illuminating meaning, Gumbrecht contends, presence cultures address “feelings, for example, or the impressions of closeness and absence, or the degrees of approval and resistance.”402 Seen under the rubric of ‘presence culture,’ affective reading practices, whether expressed in the form of the intense prayer inspired by meditative theological texts like the *Meditationes Vitae Christi* or as the kinds of marginalia witnessed in H4, can more persuasively be seen as the distinct track of presence-minded readership.

This emphasis, in particular, on the physical reality of presence, displays suggestive affinities with the nature of emotion itself. Current understanding of/studies on the emotions acknowledges their grounding in the physicality of the human body, whether in tracing their genesis to individual organs of the human body, or in acknowledging the concrete effects of emotion on the body.403 But this awareness of emotion’s physicality is not the exclusive province of modern science or philosophy. Classical rhetorical texts, including Cicero’s *De oratore* and Aristotle’s *Ars rhetorica* speak of emotion as both a mental and a physical experience, particularly with regard to the felt effects of an emotion, and its manifestation to others.404 Medieval philosophers often accepted these received notions of emotion’s


somatic component; William of Conches, following Boethius, notes that the passions of the soul may be aroused when by physical sensation and sensory perception. 405

Aquinas, building on Aristotle, judges the physical manifestation of an emotion to be an essential, rather than accidental, quality, though the particular way in which the emotion is expressed, the body parts involved is itself accidental. 406 Iterations of the medieval four humors theory, including Constantinus Africanus' Liber Pantegni, link personality types to imbalances in the humors, making the body a generative organ of particular moods, while medical treatises associate the broader categories of feeling that Peter King claims constituted the province of medieval discussions of emotion not only with the movement of vital spirits, but also with sophisticated understandings of, for example, the nerves' role connecting the brain and the organs that display an emotion's exterior signs or discussions of the effect of diet on one's emotional state. 407

To a culture aware of, and even invested in, the physicality of an emotion, feeling might offer readers a particular reality to seek out in art, a presence concern

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Oxford University Press, 2012; and Simo Knuuttila, Medieval Theories of the Passions of the Soul, 49-83.


407 Knuuttila, Passions of the Soul, 57. King, meanwhile, observes that medieval thinkers did not consider the 'moods' of the four humors theory to be properly emotions, noting that they were "thought to be non-objectual somatic states, completely explicable as an imbalance of the bodily humors." He goes on, however, to state that "Medieval theories of emotions, therefore, concentrate on paradigm cases that fall under the broad conception: delight, distress, fear, and the like," the categories of emotion that the Pantegni associates with the movements of vital spirits in the body. King, "Emotion in Medieval Thought," 1.
beyond the scope of purely interpretive reading, but one that remains no less acceptable, or even desirable. Though Gumbrecht’s discussion of the Middle Ages as a presence culture does not dig particularly deeply into a wealth of examples from medieval literature, medieval literature does abound with meta-examples of a presence-driven readership, which can illuminate what concerns inspired the scribe of H4 to mark up his manuscripts the way he did. In particular, I would like to suggest that vague though the scribe’s motivations may be, we can begin to theorize the potential functions of their glosses through comparison with depictions of similar medieval readers.\textsuperscript{408}

The infamous example of readers of romance, the windblown lovers of Canto V of Dante’s \textit{Inferno}, offers us one extreme to consider. Paolo and Francesca are consummate affective, mimetic readers, identifying so deeply—too deeply, it seems, for Dante—with the romance of Lancelot and Guinevere that it becomes their own \textit{Galehaut}: reading the text is an act of emotional introspection and discovery, which impels them to consummate what they are now able to identify as love.\textsuperscript{409} Dante himself seems less than sanguine about such a reading practice, or at least, the burden of responsibility that it places on an author—he does, after all, confine the two in Hell, presumably for the actions stemming from this moment of identification and subsequent action. A substantial amount of modern criticism, too, regards the


\textsuperscript{409} Dante Alighieri, \textit{Inferno}, V.124-138.
two as deeply problematic readers. Yet, their affective reading appears not to have necessarily troubled all of Dante’s contemporaries, for Boccaccio curiously gives his *Decameron* the subtitle “Prencipe Galeotto”, a move which appears rather, according to Michelangelo Picone, to embrace this potentiality, converting the cause of readers’ ills into “medicine to his future readers,” playing a similar role in mediating between literature and experience.

To what end, however, is less than clear. The role of affectivity in reading literature is still an area into which scholarship has only more recently begun to delve, building on cognitive approaches to the topic. These, though they disagree on the precise nature of an affective reaction to fiction, generally take as their main argumentative thrust the claim that affect is an important part of the experience of

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410 See in particular Susan Noakes, “The Double Misreading of Paolo and Francesca.” *Philological Quarterly* 62.2 (1983): 221-39. Noakes argues that Paolo and Francesca’s sin was one of misreading—they put the romance down after reading about Lancelot and Guinévere’s kiss, and failed to read the whole story, which would have apprised them of the consequences awaiting the adulterous lovers. Noakes’ argument is interesting, but does not fully take into account the nature of the circulation of the poem: of the thirteenth-century copies of the *Lancelot*, the majority (22 manuscripts) circulated without the books of the Grail Quest or the Death of Arthur—the two parts of the overarching romance which depict Lancelot and Guinévere’s falls from grace. In comparison, only 15 manuscripts of the *Lancelot* contain the latter books, and of those, only 3 are full copies of the entire Arthurian romance cycle. One cannot assume that Dante’s lovers would have had a complete copy of the poem to read in the first place, making it rather misleading to assume that Dante ever intended for them—had they been good readers—to finish the tale. See also René Girard’s explication of the scene, on the frustrated mimesis of Paolo and Francesca’s reading, and on the lovers as Galehauts themselves for romantic readers of the *Commedia*. René Girard, “The Mimetic Desire of Paolo and Francesca,” in *To Double Business Bound: Essays on Literature, Mimesis, and Anthropology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 1-8.

411 Michelangelo Picone, “Trittico per Francesca, III. Petrarca e Boccaccio lettori del canto V dell’*Inferno*,” *L’Alighieri* 28 (2006): 25-39, at 36. This complex and complicated meta-literary discussion and positioning warrants a great deal more attention than it receives in this chapter and, accordingly, forms one of the foci of Chapter Four. For the purposes of this argument, it must suffice simply to observe that the sorts of affective literacies which I posit form the heart of H4’s annotational program likewise concerned a number of medieval authors who grappled with its potential application with varying degrees of approbation.
reading, in terms of both interpretation and aesthetic appreciation, and of artistic education and production, and psychological development. We can see echoes of these theories in some of the recent work on the history of emotions in the Middle Ages. The graphic representation of the Passion in medieval art, and the intensely visual language of meditative works of devotion like the *Meditationes Vitae Christi* operate in the excitative mode of speech, inspiring Christians to fervid prayer and forging individual relationships with God, as is illustrated, for example, in the English vernacular in the works of Margery Kempe and Julian of Norwich. Sarah McNamer’s work reinterpreting affective, meditative devotional texts as scripts for the performance of compassion offers a vision of reading practices in which iterative introspective reading and empathetic identification with the text allows religious women to adopt the role of a true Bride of Christ. Medieval arts of love operated, according to internal generic definitions, as a sort of secular counterpart to these devotional texts. As attentive readers reproduce the outward signs of love in an iterative performance of the emotion, the internal sentiment of the lover is aligned with its external seeming in a self-conscious generation of affect that Tracy


Adams identifies at the heart of the composition of arts of love from Ovid's love poetry to the narrative romance of the *Roman de la Rose*.\(^{414}\)

Indeed, in a sense, this sort of affective, mimetic reading is precisely the active model of reading that Mary Carruthers identifies—even in the case of poor Paolo and Francesca—as proper reading in the Middle Ages, in which the *exemplum* of a story is re-enacted and rewritten on its readers’ memories.\(^{415}\) It recalls the process of *assimilatio* at the heart of “ethical” reading, in Judson Boyce Allen’s terms, in which the real worlds of a poem’s audience and its own textuality each exert pressure on the other so that reality appropriates textuality: Thus, Allen explains, “a medieval person who wishes to be ethically good could achieve that condition by acting as if he were in a story”—without being subsumed by it. It is in this sense that we can most productively see H4 re-scripting *Troilus* as a handbook of love, and

\(^{414}\) Adams, “Performing the Art of Love,” 55. This self-fashioning is definitively extra-hermeneutic, occupying a dimension of the text that exists outside the metaphysical and grounded in the spiritual and somatic nature of emotion and its real presence in the nature of art. Adams, here, relates this to the way that Paul Zumthor conceptualizes the relationship between poetry and its audience, in which this “intense bond...effects a ‘transfert’ (transfer), which ‘provoque chez l’auditeur une activité perceptive, affective, intellective qui constitue une intense participation: celle-ci, dans son dynamisme déborde souvent en activité corporelle, en geste, en cri, en danse ...’” [provokes, in the hearer, a perceptive, affective, intellectual activity that constitutes an intense participation, which often boils over, in its dynamism, into corporeal activity, in gestures, in cries, in dance...] (57), emphasis mine. Zumthor’s emphasis, in particular, on readers’ physical expression of this transfer are consonant with the experience of emotion, in modern and medieval theory, particular with the somatic manifestation generally thought to be essential to emotion in so much as it must occur, but accidental in the mode of its expression. Though Zumthor concentrates here on poetry read aloud, Peter Allen observes, similarly, of amatory fictions that poetry of this kind is not only constant in form, but is also consistently emotionally moving: it has an extraordinary power to recall and evoke feelings with which most readers and listeners can identify. This is why love poems are so satisfying: they are concrete representations of thoughts and feelings that need to be put into words” (3). See also Peter L. Allen, *The Art of Love: Amatory Fiction from Ovid to the Romance of the Rose* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992).

complicate our understanding of extra-scholastic reading practices. It is ethical not by virtue of rendering it a product of scholastic commentary, but in a more subtly complicated fashion arising out of the concentrated scribal emphasis on affective expression in the poem, and the visual language that conveys it. Its marginalia may offer readers scripts for the performance of love, of passion in the full sense of the word, or even of empathy or compassion—re-inscribing the poem, in other words, as a vehicle for the introspective identification, performance, and ultimately, legitimate experience of a range of affective positions immanent in the text itself—or perhaps, they demonstrate the marks of the scribe himself reading thus. The presence-concerns, then, in H4, may offer us a glimpse of a writer seeking not moral meaning but intensity of feeling, not interpretation, but appreciation, an experience of literature that is not, at least, overtly exegetical yet no less legitimately a facet of medieval reading practices.
CONCLUSION:

MARGINALIA, METALITERATURE, AND THE NOT-SO-IDIOSYNCRATIC READER

In this dissertation, I have begun to sketch a version of the wider picture of medieval literary criticism and reading practices. Previous scholarship on the subject has explored, in impressive depth and detail what I term here scholastic literary criticism, drawn from commentaries that circulated in the medieval schools—introductions to classical authors, and at times extensive scriptural commentaries. These commentaries were concerned with the morality of a text’s author and subject matter, and likewise invested in guiding readers to correct understanding of an author’s intention and a text’s meaning and use. These foci have dominated current research on medieval literary criticism, despite the fact that some of the earliest advocates of these theories clearly state their conviction that the broader picture of medieval reading practices remains to be explored and understood. This dissertation represents a step in this direction, gleaning, from a specific subset of Latin glosses to Chaucer’s poetry, two approaches to reading that stand apart from the scholastic models.

I would like to conclude by way of some discussion toward the necessary future shape of this project. Fascinating as the Chaucer glosses are, the context of their genesis is uncertain, and the extent to which they represent widespread
alternative medieval attitudes toward literature thus likewise difficult to ascertain. This difficulty, I maintain, represents an essential avenue of inquiry for future studies of Chaucerian manuscripts and readers. Here I can sketch only some preliminary evidence that points the way toward the larger picture in which the conclusions of this dissertation must be situated, and starts to form the framework along which further study might progress.

The manuscripts discussed in this dissertation demonstrate the wide potential range within which medieval readers consumed literary texts outside of the scholastically-driven modes embraced by current criticism. They show Chaucer embracing a hermeneutic of indeterminacy and ambiguity, over carefully explicated textual “correctness” and orthodoxy. They show scribes and manuscript owners interacting with these glosses in ways that highlight readers’ polyglot and multitextual literacy. And they show later readers eschewing moralizing readings—even those explicitly signaled in the text—and choosing instead affective reading practices that encourage emotional identification with and subsumption into the text. These manuscripts paint an engaging picture of reading outside of the current narrative of medieval literary criticism, but like any manuscript study, they remain singular cases: evidence of one text, one reader or group thereof, and limited only to those hands which had both access to the book and the inclination to pick up a pen and add to it (or, in the case of Chaucer’s authorial marginal work, one author’s inclination to shape readers’ interactions with his work.) The challenge remaining, then, is assessing characteristics of broader practice: are these merely the works of idiosyncratic readers? Or might they be individual instances of a larger public? We
can attempt to assess this in two ways: via some survey, cursory though it is in this conclusion, and through metaliterary depictions of medieval readers.

The great conundrum in discussing Chaucer’s glossing, particularly inasmuch as they are understood as an authorial enterprise, rests on the question of what, if anything, was the poet’s source. It might seem logical to suggest that Chaucer must have been inspired by the manuscripts of his English contemporaries, but there is little evidence of similarities beyond the very superficial. Chaucer’s contemporary, John Gower, includes an elaborate apparatus of Latin material with his *Confessio Amantis*, including Latin elegiac verses, prose summaries, and occasional marginal citations of authorities and explanations of allusions in the English text. The Latin apparatus is generally understood as Gower’s “attempt... to provide for his own works that apparatus which medieval readers believed to be appropriate to an *auctor.*”\(^{416}\) In other words Gower’s Latin apparatus is a commentary *par excellence* in the mode of scholastically-derived medieval literary criticism. Gower’s Latin, then, provides a remarkably poor potential source for the Chaucer glosses, which Derek Pearsall concludes are “of course of a completely different kind” from Gower’s apparatus.\(^{417}\)


\(^{417}\) Pearsall, “Gower’s Latin,” 14. See also Kerby-Fulton, et. al. *Opening Up*, 220-221. Kerby-Fulton notes that, though Gower, too, wrote for multiple different kinds of readers and linguistic abilities, “the EL glosses of *The Canterbury Tales* do not function as Gower’s do—however much they look like them. ... broadly speaking, ambiguity in Gower’s glossing is rare; one tends to know where the glossator stands on issues” (220).
Another contemporary of Chaucer’s, William Langland, provides, after a fashion, the nearest insular analogues to the Chaucer glosses, but with a significant catch. Langland’s *Piers Plowman* includes a significant number of Latin quotations which play against the vernacular verse is part of the main text itself. John A. Alford’s *Piers Plowman: A Guide to the Quotations* notes the at-times ambiguous relationship between Latin and English in *Piers*; an ambiguity which, Kathryn Kerby-Fulton demonstrates, parallels the multiplicities of meaning enabled in the Chaucer glosses. Langland’s Latin is, however, usually firmly rooted in the body of the text—while the hermeneutic similarities are intriguing, the formal differences are not insignificant. There are, however, a very few manuscripts of *Piers* that place the in-text Latin quotations in the margins of the poem. Oxford, Bodleian Libraries MS. Laud Misc. 656, contains a version of the C-Text which ends incomplete, and is preceded by a copy of *The Siege of Jerusalem*. It includes some of the kinds of marginalia typically seen in *Piers* manuscripts, including a number of literary genre markers, and Latin identifications of the Seven Deadly Sins, but also copies the poem’s Latin quotations in the text’s margins, akin to the layout of *The Canterbury Tales* and its glosses. These examples of the marginal treatment of Langland’s Latin, though intriguing, are few, and there is little evidence to cite any one in particular as a source for Chaucer’s glosses—or even to indicate that he had occasion to study them. They do, however, offer tantalizing evidence of yet another idiosyncratic

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419 The latter is a particularly common addition to cycles on marginalia in *Piers* MSS. See Kerby-Fulton, et. al., *Opening Up*, 223-234.
reader interested in the interplay of Latin *auctoritas* and vernacular verse—particularly, those which, as Kerby-Fulton shows Langland’s Latin and English do, do not always accord with one another or disclose clear textual meaning. They, like Chaucer’s glosses, are likely written for a tiered readership, not all of whom would necessarily care to, or be able to, dig into this polyglot textual interplay. In this case, we see a reader working in the opposite grain from Jean d’Angoulême’s *Canterbury Tales* edition—where Jean brought the glosses into the text, privileging Latin over vernacular by presenting it to readers before they encountered Chaucer’s use of the source. Here the reader of Laud Misc. 656 has drawn the Latin out from the body of the text to the margins, placing it alongside the English verse such that as it is (quite literally) marginalized, it is positioned on the same line as, and set visually on par with, the English verse it accompanies. No one reading, neither text nor paratext, is assigned prominence; the reader must assess for him- or herself how to interpret the two.

*Piers Plowman* does have a history of marginal glossing on the parts of its readers, much of it vernacular, but learned Latin source glossing of the kind seen in *The Canterbury Tales* is uncommon; readers’ notes tend instead to summarize the narrative, mark the speech of particular characters, and offer polemical commentary on the subject of the poem. There are a very few exceptions; Oxford, Oriel College

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420 Carl James Grindley, “Reading *Piers Plowman* C-Text Annotations: Notes toward the Classification of Printed and Written Marginalia in Texts from the British Isles 1300-1641,” in *The Medieval Professional Reader at Work: Evidence from the Manuscripts of Chaucer, Langland, Kempe, and Gower*, edited by Kathryn Kerby-Fulton and Maidie Hilmo, English Literary Studies 85 (Victoria, Ca.: University of Victoria Press, 2001): 73-142; C. David Benson and Lynne S. Blanchfield, *The
MS 79 (O), a copy of the B-Text, includes a curious Latin addition to the cycle of vernacular marginalia preserved in O and Cambridge University Library MS Ll.iv.14 (C2). In O, the scribe—likely a member of the clerical proletariat—ends his cycle of marginalia with the note “Antecrist” at the passage where Will dreams about the arrival of the Antichrist. The same scribe returns to this brief note to copy a much longer, learned exegetical quotation:


dies supra numerum perfinitum .45 .prestolatur: quibus & dominus Saluator in sua magestate venturus est. (Jerome on Daniel 12, “Blessed is he who waits and comes through [perseveres] until 1335 days have passed. Blessed,” he says, “is he who, after the death of Antichrist, remains for forty-five days beyond the aforementioned number, when the Lord Saviour is about to come in his majesty.” (fol. 84r, note to B.XX.53).421

This gloss, Kerby-Fulton suggests, is a response to a doctrinal question raised by a textual error a few lines further down in the poem, which shortchanges the eschatological 45 days that would have to be endured between the Antichrist’s arrival and his death, suggesting that the blessed would endure “Lenger þan lenten .~ to be so rebuked” rather than the typical “lenger sith Leute was so rebuked.422”

Manuscripts of Piers Plowman: The B-Version (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997); and Kerby-Fulton et al., Opening Up, 223.


422 Kerby-Fulton, “The Clerical Proletariat,” 9-10. Kerby-Fulton observes, “I would suggest that what unnerved the annotator and caused him to spring into action was something textual: in an unnoticed error in O’s main text a few lines below, fools (that is, “fools for Christ”), the only ones not
Here, we can add another idiosyncratic reader—or at least, a scribe who, though he generally composed shorter marginali notes of the type frequently seen in *Piers* manuscripts, engaged momentarily in the interpretive practices enabled by Chaucer’s glosses—to the slowly increasing corps reading vernacular poetry outside the framework of scholastically-driven commentaries and interpretive practices. This particular annotation offers us an example of a medieval professional reader of *Piers Plowman* engaging with the poem in the manner made possible by Chaucer’s marginalia—that is, reading the text intelligently against his intertextual knowledge of Latin *auctoritas*, thinking critically about the conflict between the vernacular verse he had been presented and Jerome’s teachings, and marking the passage marginally in a manner that would direct future readers’ attention to the contradiction without foreclosing the question for them.

Chaucer’s insular contemporaries offer few examples of the kind of marginal apparatus seen in *The Canterbury Tales* and *Troilus and Criseyde*, but the manuscript afterlives of their poems show more individual instances of the reading practices outlined in this dissertation. If we wish to further illuminate the dissemination of these practices—and to discover potential analogues to Chaucer’s extensive source glosses—we ought to look further afield, among the copies of continental works which are known to have influenced the poet. It has been suggested that the

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423 It is, of course, far beyond the scope of any single study to address the manuscript permutations of every work of vernacular poetry on the Continent; this study is, accordingly,
chiosi to Boccaccio’s Teseida, as another example of literary auto-criticism, might serve as a viable source of inspiration for Chaucer’s marginalia. They are, however, both formally and hermeneutically dissimilar from The Canterbury Tales glosses. A couple of examples should suffice to demonstrate this difference.

The Teseida is prefaced by a dedication of the book to Fiammetta, the object of the poet’s affections, and a brief summary of the poem’s story. The chiose themselves begin with the first line of the poem, offering lexical clarifications of the reasoning behind particular choices of diction or mythological reference. As Boccaccio begins the poem with an invocation of the muses, addressing them as “O sorelle castalie, che nel monte / Elica contente dimorate” [O Castalian sisters, who dwell, happy, on Mount Helicon].

The chiose here explains at length the meaning of this reference, informing readers:

Nel principio del suo libro fa l’autore, secondo l’antico costume de’ componitori, una sua invocazione, e chiama le Muse in suo aiuto alla presente opera; e chiamale sorelle, perciò che furono nove, tutte figliuole di Giove e d’una che si chiamò Memoria, secondo che I poeti scrivon; castalie le chiama per una fonte che è in Boezia, ch’a nome Castalia, consecrate alle dette Muse. Elica è un monte nel quale ess esimilmente dimorano.

[In the beginning of his book, the author makes, according the ancient custom of the poets, an invocation, and calls the muses in his aid to the present work; and he calls them ‘sisters’

somewhat artificially restricted to the major works of poets known to have influenced Chaucer, and, in some cases, to have been part of the literary circle of the French and English courts during the Hundred Years’ War—on whose influence on the landscape of literary England, more later.


425 Boccaccio, Teseide, chiose I.1.
because there were nine, all the daughters of Jove and a
woman who was called Memoria, according to what the poets
write; ‘castalie’ he calls them for a foundtain which is in Beozia,
which is called Castalia, and is given, consecreated, to the
Muses. Helicon, similarly, is a mountain on which they dwell.]

This first chiosa explains in inescapable detail not only any reference that might
prove unclear to Boccaccio’s readers, but also the origins of the rhetorical move
opening his poem, reminding them that this invocation of the Muses is a traditional
part of classical poetry—one whose adoption here places him squarely within the
company of these classical poets, demonstrating an avowed interest in establishing
Boccaccio as a poet who is vested with the kinds of authority that form such a
foundational concern of scholastic interpretive practices. This concern with
authority likewise carries over into a parallel concern for correctness, as Boccaccio
takes care to explain metaphorical and allegorical language for his readers. Mars
appears to Theseus, sparking the desire for revenge against the Amazons that
incites the action of Book I:

E ’n cotal guise, in Trazia ritornando,
Si fé sentire al crucciato Teseo,
In lui di sé un fier caldo lasciando;
E col suo carro Avanti procedeo,
Dovunque giva lo cielo infiammando;
Poi nelle valli del monte Rifeo
Ne’ temple suoi posando, si raffisse,
Sperando ben che ciò che fu, seguisse.\(^{426}\)

[In this manner, returning to Thrace, he made himself felt to
the angry Theseus, leaving, in him, a burning pride;
And with his chariot, he went ahead to Avanti, wherever he
went, the sky was burning; then, in the valley of Mount Rifeo,

\(^{426}\) Boccacci, *Teseida*, I.113-120.
reclining in his temple, he rested himself, hoping very much that that which was to be, would follow.]

Boccaccio is concerned that readers correctly understand both the symbolism of the pagan God, and the literal or historical bases for this symbolism:

Scrivono fingendo I poeti che la casa di Marte, dio delle battaglie, sia in Trazia, a piè de’ monte Riffei. Alla quale fizione, volere intendere, è da sapere che, secondo che vogliono alcuni filosofi, che l’ira e il furore s’accende più fieramente e più di leggiere negli uomini ne’ quali è molto sangue, che in quegli ne’ quali n’è poco; e questo veggiamo noi essere vero per aperta testimonianza di quelli della Magna: quelli di Barberia sono sotto calso cielo e hanno poco di sangue e sono uomini mansueti; quelli della riosi e vaghi di guerra: per che ottimamente finsero I poeti la casa di marte, cioè l’appetito della guerra, in Trazia, cioè in wuella provincial posta sotto tramontane là dove sono similmente li monti Riffei.

[The poets write, imaginng the house of Mars, the God of War, to be in Thrace, at the foot of Mount Rifei. In which story, they want to show, and to know that, according to that which the ancient philosophers desire, that anger and fury ignite themselves more proudly, and more brightly in men in whom there is a great deal of blood, than in those men there is such that there is only a small amount; and this we understand to be true through the example of those men of Barbery and those of Germany: the men of Barbery live underneath a burning sky and have little blood and are meek men; the men of Germany are under a cold sky and all full of blood, furious and vague in war: through which the poets very well imagined the house of Mars, that is, the hunger for war, in Thrace, that is, in the region located between the mountains, there where similarly is placed Mount Rifei.]

Boccaccio is careful to explicate the allegorical meaning of the passage’s physical location of the Temple of Mars, identifying historical examples—a mode of literal reading in scholastic theories of literatry criticism—and attributing these fictions to “the poets”, simultaneously a group of unidentified auctores when Boccaccio finds authority for his own verse, and a group to which he now implicitly adds himself—
he has, after all, continued their figurative traditions. Boccaccio’s chiose thus appear hermeneutically disfferent from Chaucer’s glosses; they are, likewise, formally distinct. They are prose explications of the verse, written in Italian, they neither ask readers to perform the feats of translation demanded by Chaucer’s glosses; a reader who can understand the language of the poem itself likewise can understand the language of its ciose. Nor do these glosses refuse to disclose a line of orthodox (indeed, as they are authorial they might be the closest thing to interpretive orthodoxy) textual meaning, instead explicating it rigorously. They may enjoy some hermeneutic analogues in England, but Chaucer’s glosses are not in this group; rather, Derek Pearsall notes, in particular, their similarities to Gower’s Latin—and along with it, their implicit differences from Chaucer’s glosses.427

Likewise, the material history of Dante’s Commedia appears, upon superficial inspection, to provide a compelling potential source for Chaucer’s glosses. Four of the extant manuscripts of the Commedia preserve a series of Latin marginalia of unknown authorship, generally termed the “Anonymous Latin Commentary” on the text; two—London, British Library MS Egerton 943 and Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana Plut. XC sup. 114—contain the commentary’s longer form. In Egerton 943, the margins of the manuscript teem with a series of explanatory comments, written in a relatively clear, if faded, textura only slightly smaller than the hand of the main text, and marked by alternating blue and red paraphs—a presentation similar to that afforded the glosses in the Ellesmere manuscript. The anonymous

427 Pearsall, Gower’s Latin, 15-16.
Latin Commentary’s glosses are preceded by a cycle of letters, which begins anew with each new canto, and which link each gloss with the relevant part of Dante’s verse, marked with the corresponding letter. While these at least resemble Chaucer’s glosses formally, in both the manuscript mise-en-page and in terms of the linguistic skills they demand of their audience, their hermeneutic function differs dramatically from that of the Chaucer glosses.

The commentary begins with a Latin prologue, occupying the better part of the textual space on folio 2v, below a diagram of the circles of hell. It reads:

In principio istius comedie videndum est quicquid auctor intendit declarare in ......

Auctor iste declarat de qualitate ciuilitatis totius urbis et diuidit ipsas in tres partes vna quorum intelligitur gens bona alia praua tercia intelligitur illa quae a malo se separat versus bonum transit et quia quod seperandum se a bono et per transire versus malum aliquod [tempus] est non potest diuidi praedictam ciuilitas nisi in [tres] pars vt uerbi gratia

Cito quod homo bonus malum ... efficitur prauus sine aliqua uia [tempus] sed malus homo separando se a malo et transeun do versus bonum utitur de necessitate aliiuis temporis et hec est ratio quia tota ciuilitas [mundi sive] qualitas gentium diui (-) ditur solum in tres partes quae figurative ponitur in forma inferni purgatorii et paradisi .. in modo in ista prima parte autor tracta de gente praua et uocat ipsum infernum secundum ut infra distinguitur

¶ Notandum est auctor iste in ista prima parte siue cantica istius comedie demonstrat nobis qualitatem siue essentiam quorum

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428 I quote here from my own transcription, which contains significant gaps where the manuscript, sadly, has faded beyond legibility. I do cite Cioffari’s transcription below, however, there are places where the evidence of the manuscript itself differs visibly from Cioffari’s transcription of the same text, but agrees with the readings of the transcription of the same passage from Laur. XC sup. 114, which Cioffari himself quotes in his edition.

429 Here Cioffari (who admits that it the text is practically illegible) has “ipsa”, however it is unclear to me that there is sufficient evidence beyond editorial intervention, as “ipsa” is more a logical inference.
Libel hominum ignorantium uiam ueritatis, via boni et sicut inuenit se in mediate cursus ui[te] humane cognoscentem omnia supradicta unde debemus scire quod ipse uidendo se in silua de qua loquitur [...]. scilicet inter homines supradictos i voluit se extrahere de ea et ascendere ad meliorem uitam in qua non poterat bene ascendere nisi prius uideret uicia et peccata hominum. Et debemus scire quod auctor iste figurat uitam cecam hominum in inferno quia\(^{430}\) sicut infernus dicetur esse in bassiori loco quam sit sic[ut] vicia et peccata faciunt omnes esse in simile qualitate et distinguuntur in diuersis [m]odos peccata supradicta Adhuc dicit quod media pars cursus uite humane de quo in principio loquitur nunc ex triginta tres uel triginta quatuor et quia multi\(^{431}\) [fr]ansiunt ultra praedictum cursum debemus scire quod accidit causa firmitate ossorum et nervorum hominis quia magis compressioni ta siue compressionati sunt a medietate praedicti cursum usque ad [finem quam] ... ...... ad medietatem et hec est causa.\(^{432}\)

\(^{430}\) Cioffari has 'quia' here, which makes sense, though the abbreviation, appears different from the way the scribe normally seems to abbreviate “quia”.

\(^{431}\) Cioffari here has 'nulli' but there don’t appear to be enough minims for that: it looks like 'milti', which agrees with Barbi’s transcription from Laur. Plut. XC. Sup. 114.

\(^{432}\) Cioffari and I disagree significantly on some points here. His edition reads:

In principio istius comedie vivendum est quicquid auctor intendit declarare in ipsa. Auctor iste declarat de qualitate caritatis totius urbis, et dividit[ur] ista in tres partes; una ipsarum intelligitur gens bona, alia prima, tertia intelligitur illa que a malo se separat et versus bonum transit. Et quia separando se a bono et pertransire versus malum aliquod [tempus] est, non pote[st] ... nda (?) ... pre-dicta nisi in tres partes, ut verbi gratia cito quod homon bonus qualiter [pravum vel malum fecit, efficitur malus] sine aliqua via ... in malis homo se[parando se] de malo et transeundo versus bonum ut[itur] de [necessitate] aliquis temporis et hec est quia tota eternitas [mundi sive] qualitas gentium dividitur solum in tres partes, que figurative ponuntur in forma inferni, purgatorii et paradisi, in quo in dicta prima parte auctor tractat de gente prava et vocat ipsam infernum (ms infernum), secundum ut infra distinguitor.

[In the beginning of this comedy is shown everything the author intends to make clear in it. This author makes clear the nature of the behavior of all of the city, and he divides these into three parts, by one of which is understood good people, by the other, bad people, and by the third ... is understood those who separate themselves from evil and cross over toward good. And because there is no time to cross to evil when separating oneself from good, the aforementioned behavior cannot be divided except into three parts. For example, as soon as a good man does something wicked or evil, he is made into a wicked man without any passage of time; bu the wicked man, separating himself from evil and crossing to good, takes some time by necessity. And this is the reason all behavior, [or] the quality of people, is divided only into three parts, which are placed figuratively in the form of hell, purgatory, and heaven.

Barbi’s transcription of the same part from Laur. Plut. XC sup. 114 reads:

In principio istius Comedie vivendum est quis autor iste intendit declarare. Unde sciemus est quod intencio istius autors fuit declarare et dicere de qualitate civilitatis tocius orbis Et dividitur liber iste in tres partes, sicut triplex qualitas reperitur: una quorum inteligitur gens bona, alia prava, tertia que a malo se separat et versus bonum properat; et quia separando se a bono et pertransire ad malum aliquod tempus non est, non potest dividi dicta civilitas nisi in tres partes. Verba gratia, statim quod homo bonus pravum vel malum facit, efficitur malus sine aliquo spazio temporis; sed malus homo separando se a malo et transeundo ad bonum, utilit de necessitate aliquo tempore. Et hec est racio quia tota civilitas mundi, sive qualitas gentium, solum dividitur in tres partes, que figurative ponuntur in forma inferni, purgatorii et paradisi. Unde autor modo tractat de prima parte, scilicet de gente prava, et vocat ipsam infernum, sicut infra distinctur. Notandum est quod autor iste in ista prima parte seu canticha huius Comedie demonstrat nobis qualitatem sive essenciam quorumlibet hominem ignoranciam viam veritatis, idest viam boni, et sic invenit se in mediate cursus vite humane cognoscentem omnia supradicta et involutum (ms. involutus) tenebris peccatorum. Unde sciemus est quod autor, videns se in fila peccatorum de qua loquitur, scilicet inter homines supradictos, voluit recedere a dicta via, seu vicio, et ire ad meliorem viam, vel vitam, ad quam non bene poterat ascendere nisi prius videret visia hominum. Modo debemus scire quod autor significat vitam cecam ... in inferno, quia sicut infernus est [c]echus et in inferiori loco terre, sic vicia et peccata faciant esse homines in simili qualitate, et distinguuntur (ms. distinguitur) diversis modis peccata supradicta. Unde debemus scire quod media pars discursus vite humane, de qua superius locutus est, est circa XXXV annos, et quia multi transeunt ultra predictum cursum, debemus scire quod accidit causa firmitatis ossorum et navorum hominum qui magis compresionati sunt a mediatem. Et hec est cause unde ista est divisio sive figura inferni, qui ipso puniuntur. Unde debemus scire quod quanto peccatum est magis grave sive peius, tanto magis remotum est de celo et vicinum centro, et ideo sic figurative ponuntur circuli interni et quod gradatim de grado in gradum usque ad medium centri. Et hoc immaginandum est quod infra centrum sit maxima fovea sive concavitas subteranea usque ad ipsum centrum.

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¶It must be noted that the author, in the first part or song of this comedy, shows us the nature or whole way of truth of ignorant men, that is, the way of good, et thus finds himself in the middle of the path of human life, understanding all the things previously said, whence we must understand that he, seeing himself in the forest of which is spoken, that is, among the men spoken of above. He wished to withdraw himself from it, and ascend to the better path, onto which one cannot easily ascend without first seeing the vices and sins of men. And we must understand that the author represents the life of the blind man in hell, because just as hell is in a lower place, so do vices and sins make all men of a similar quality, and the sins discussed above are distinguished in various ways. Thus farhe says that the middle part of the path of life of which he spoke in the beginning, is now thirty-three or thirty-four [years], and because many men go over the final course, we should understand that the cause that weakens the strength of the bones and nerves of man, which are greatly compressed in the middle of the of the aforementioned course, up to that end which ... to the middle, and this is the cause.\textsuperscript{433}

The manuscript, then, begins by firmly setting the Commedia and its commentary within the world of the kinds of scholastic auctoritas courted by Gower and Boccaccio. It describes the subject matter of the poem and its figuration into the three spheres—inferno, purgatory, and paradise—of the Commedia, before then explicating the materia of the first book of the poem, and the symbolism of the figure of the author. The remainder of the glosses follow a similar hermeneutic pattern, the majority of them explaining the author’s various allusions to figures he encounters as well as to other concepts. They witness a form of lexical glossing, meant to aid readers’ comprehension, from which developed more detailed reader aids like the detailed explanations of mythologic and historic allusions in the

\textsuperscript{433} My particular thanks to Jonathan Newman, for his assistance in translating this passage.
Commedia. In Canto V, for example, one of the longer lexical glosses explains both the antecedent of a pronoun, and the history of that antecedent: at “laltre chollei che succise amorosa,” [V.61] a reference to Dido, the gloss—which is placed, by its letter, specifically in reference to ‘chollei’ [she]—reads:

Ista fuit dido regina cartaginis
que fuit uxor [sychaei] quo mortuo
comb[us]sit corpus eius sicut mos i
erat paganis et cinerem uiri conti
nue tenebat in mundo uase i
sub capite lecti sui super quo
binere [iu]rauerat et [iu]erat i
perpetuam casticatem quod uotum freg
it et uxorata fuit enim postea en
ee qui ad eam appulerat quem ipsa
pluribus diebus secum tenuit et
eum exinde recedere nolebat435 ↓
post modum eneas clam ab ea di
scressit et in ytalianm uenit. Dido hoc
sciens mag[nitudine] doloris
ex amoris intemperancia car
taginem incendit et se ipsam ↓
pugione transfodit.436

[This woman was Dido, the queen of Carthage, who was the wife of Sychaues, who in death burned his body as was the custom of pagans, and who continued to keep the ashes of her husband in an ornamental vessel, within which she collected his remains and on which ashes she swore and vowed perpetual chastity, a vow which she broke, and indeed, afterward, she married Aeneas, who landed (his fleet) at Carthage, where he remained with her for many days, and she did not wish him to leave there. Afterward, Aeneas secretly


435 Cioffari has ‘uolebat,’ but the hand here is clear.

436 British Library MS Egerton 943, fol. 11r.
departed from her, and came into Italy. Dido, thus realizing the magnitude of her sorrow from the intemperance of her love, burned Carthage and impaled herself upon a dagger.]

The commentary here, rather than simply explaining who ‘she’ is, goes on to offer readers a brief summary of Dido’s marriage, a description of the pagan funerary practices that would lead to her possessing her late husband’s ashes, and the history of her union with Aeneas. The implications of the far-reaching sources to which the glosses look for commentary are intriguing, and certainly deserve more explication than they have currently received, but however impressive and sophisticated they are, they clearly operate along very different hermeneutic parameters than the glosses to Chaucer’s poetry.

Instead, the most intriguing potential analogues to Chaucer’s marginalia come from the manuscripts of Chaucer’s French contemporaries and, of course, their great predecessors in Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, the authors of the Roman de la Rose. It is somewhat surprising, in fact, that the Rose has not long before been suggested as a potential source for Chaucer’s marginal enterprise, given the poet’s tantalizing reference to the idea of a glossed Rose in the Book of the Duchess, his earliest major poem and one generally associated with the influence of the French literary scene. Here, Chaucer’s insomniac narrator, finally able to

437 The English compilator John Shirley included some similar glosses in his manuscripts, particularly for stories from classical stories like Dido’s. For more, see Kathryn Veeman, “‘Sende His Booke Agyyne to Shirley’: John Shirley and the Circulation of Manuscripts in Fifteenth-Century England” (PhD diss, University of Notre Dame, 2011).

438 See also the poet’s continued association with the Middle English translation of the Romaunt of the Rose.
sleep thanks to the soporific influences of a night reading and meditating on Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, awakes to find himself in a sort of architectural embodiment of intertextuality, in which the windows depict the story of the Trojan war, and the walls “with colours fyne / were peynted, bothe text and glose, / [Of] al the Romaine of the Rose” [BD 332-34, emphasis mine].

Medieval commentaries on the *Roman de la Rose* have, generally, been subsumed under the larger aegis of the “Querelle de la Rose,” a lengthy debate over the literary merit of the *Rose*, carried on between Christine de Pisan and Jean Gerson, on one side, and Pierre and Gontier Col and Jean de Montreuil on the other—no other, systematic commentary in the manner given to Latin *auctores*, or to Dante and Boccaccio, had been written on the *Rose*. Their debates, however, did follow the parameters one might expect from academic prologues to, and discussions of, literary texts, outlining concerns with the poem’s questionable morality and its erotic language, and tracing the extent to which it could be understood as the poet speaking in his own voice, or adopting an allegorical *persona*

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439 For a critical edition, see Christine de Pisan, Jean Gerson, Jean de Montreuil, Gontier et Pierre Col, *Le débat sur le "Roman de la Rose"*. Édition critique, introduction, traductions, notes par Eric Hicks, Paris, Champion (Bibliothèque du XV* siècle, 43), 1977. Minnis observes, “The quarrel over the *Rose* was heavily indebted to conventions of Latin commentary on grammatical *auctores*, particularly Ovid, and indeed (to a lesser extent) to biblical commentary, two parallel traditions which in medieval Tuscany first Dante and subsequently Petrarch and Boccaccio were to bring together to such transformative effect. However, no scholar attempted a formal, blow-by-blow commentary on the *Rose* itself. Sporadic glossing may indeed be found in certain manuscripts of the *Rose*, but no systematic exposition was produced.” Alastair Minnis, *Magister Amoris: The Roman de la Rose and Vernacular Hermeneutics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), vii; Kevin Brownlee and Sylvia Huot, eds., *Rethinking the Romance of the Rose: Text, Image, Reception* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992). Jean Molinet also composed a *Roman de la Rose moralisé*, which though unedited, is extant in three manuscripts: Den Haag, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 128 C 5; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 1462; and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 24393.
in order to craft a sort of *remedium amoris*. A number of manuscripts of the *Rose* record annotations that function within this mode of textual engagement; along the lines of the glosses to *Piers Plowman*, they include *notae*, speaker identifications, topic glosses, and polemical responses. Many of these glosses, like Boccaccio’s *chiosi* and many readers’ notes to *Piers Plowman*, are written in the vernacular. A significant number of *Rose* manuscripts, moreover, include systematic commentary in the forms of rubrics and illuminations—much like copies of Dante’s *Commedia*—which help shape the presentation of the poem, often according to the needs and interests of a specific intended audience.

A handful of *Rose* manuscripts, however, contain appendices of Latin marginalia. Chapter Two addressed a select group of these: BnF fr. 1560, whose nine glosses include a set of conflicting *auctorites* on the subject of the utility of dreams, set alongside the opening of the poem, whose competing authoritative voices clash with one another and with Guillaume’s narratorial insistence on the validity of his particular dream, leaving the reader uncertain which voice emerges

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triumphant in the debate; BnF Arsenal 3337, appended with a sprawling body of source glosses from Ovid’s poetry; Turin, Bibl. Univ. L. III. 22, which likewise includes a number of source glosses from Ovid in the discourse of La Vielle; and BnF fr. 24390, with its apparatus of marginal quotations from a number of sources and analogues, and numerous passages in French from the *Remaniement* of Gui de Mori.\(^{442}\) To this we might add London, British Library MS Additional 12042, which contains a number of source glosses from Ovid; Chalon-sur-Saône, Bibliothèque Municipale 33, which includes a number of marginal Latin readers’ notes; and Notre Dame MS 34, which includes some philosophical commentary near its end.\(^{443}\) These bear varying degrees of similarity to Chaucer’s glosses: BnF fr. 24390 and Arsenal 3337 contain source glosses without citation; BnF fr. 1560 and British Library MS Additional 12042 include citation. BnF fr. 24390 appears designed for and annotated by a clerical audience, for whom Ovid’s poetry and Gratian’s *Decretum* were equally appealing avenues for recontextualizing the *Rose*.

British Library MS Additional 12042, much like BnF fr. 1560, engages in explicit recontextualization of the *Rose* alongside multiple competing sources. Jean


de Meun takes up Guillaume’s poem and addresses himself to his Dreamer’s despair:

Bel Acueil is imprisoned, and he has lost all hope of attaining the Rose:

Des or enforcera mi deus  
Senz faille il est veirs que li deus  
D’Amours treis dons, seue merci,  
Me dona, mais je les pert ci:  
Douz Penser, qui point ne m’aïde,  
Douz Pa[r]ler, me refaut d’aïde,  
Li tierz avait non Douz Regart,  
Perdu le rai, si Deus me gart  
Senz faille beaus dons i a, mais  
Il ne me vaudront riens jamais  
Se Bel Acueil n’ist de prison.444

[From now on, my miseries will increase. It is true that the God of Love, in his mercy, granted me three gifts, but I have lost them here: Sweet Thought cannot aid me at all, Sweet Speech does not refresh me with help, the third, which is called Sweet Looks, I have lost, may God protect me. Without doubt, they are beautiful gifts, but they will never be of value to me, if Bel Acueil is not freed from prison].

Here, British Library MS Additional 12042 includes two source glosses, set alongside its observation that “Le tiers se ot nom doux regart”:

Ouidius libro epistolarum  
fallitur augurio spes bona  
saepe suo

Tibullus  
Spes fovent et melius cras  
fore semper [agit].445

[Ovid, in the Book of Epistles: Good hope is often deceived in its own auguries


445 London, British Library, MS Additional 12042, fol. 33r.
Tibullus

Hope keeps one warm, and always says that tomorrow will be better].

The two authorities on hope offer contrasting theories of its utility: for Ovid, it is deceptive; for Tibullus, a comfort. Indeed, Tibullus’ verse on hope was anthologized in florilegia as “Que sint commoda spei,” the things which are the comforts of hope.\(^446\) The quotation from Ovid comes from the Heroides, Epistle XVII: Helen’s response to Paris. She grapples with the dangers of hope, which she notes is the cause of her theft from Greece in the first place—Paris’ hope that she will share his bed—and led her over the waters to Troy. She hopes that she has not cause to fear, but she observes that hope is so often deceptive.\(^447\) Neither quotation appears to be given particular prominence over the other; rather, like The Canterbury Tales source glosses, they present readers with competing auctorites through which to read the Rose: they refuse to disclose the real utility of the God of Love’s gifts, and look winkingly forward to an ending which they do not share with the reader, who must continue reading if she wishes to see if Bel Acueil is released from prison.

The glosses in these manuscripts remain unedited, and cursorily catalogued at best, yet they represent potential hermeneutic analogues to the glosses in The Canterbury Tales. At the least, they represent further idiosyncratic readers, whose engagement with the Rose parallels facets of the Tales glosses. Where paucity of


provenance cannot definitively associate Chaucer with any one manuscript as his
direct source, they nonetheless expand the numbers of known readers working
outside the scholastic models privileged by current criticism. Yet, there is a further
instance of similar hermeneutic complication which Chaucer likely did see, at least
in some form if not from the extant copy: Paris Bibliothèque Nationale de France MS
fr. 20029, Eustache Deschamps’ *Double lai de la fragilité humaine*.

The manuscript, a presentation copy of Eustache Deschamps, intended for
his patron, Charles V but eventually presented to his son Charles VI following the
senior Charles’ death, is a deluxe copy of the *Double lai de la fragilité humaine*,
illustrated by a master illuminator—Michael Camille’s “Master of Death,” Pierre
Remiet—and accompanied by marginal quotation from Deschamps’ Latin source,
the *De contemptu mundi* of Pope Innocent III. The manuscript offers us another
instance of glosses that appear to be intentional additions to the *mise-en-page*, not
memoranda for revisions that somehow wound up transmitted into the textual
tradition of the poem. Moreover, they are arguably ‘authorial’; the manuscript was
copied with a great deal of deliberation under the supervision of Deschamps
himself, before being presented to Charles VI.⁴⁴⁸ Its marginalia accompany the
French verse, pairing the Latin text that Deschamps translates alongside its
rendering into the vernacular.

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⁴⁴⁸ See Patricia Michon, "Une édition manuscrite d’Eustache Deschamps: le *Double Lay de la
Fragilité Humaine*," in *L’Écrivain éditeur. 1 Du Moyen Âge à la fin du XVIIIe siècle*, edited by François
Bessire, Travaux de littérature 14 (Geneva: Droz, 2001), 27–41; and *Oeuvres Complètes de Eustache
Deschamps*, edited by Le Queux de Saint-Hillaire and Gaston Raymaud, 11 vols. Société des Anciens
Innocent’s text is, not surprisingly, itself deeply intertextual, drawing on scriptural auctoritas, and the glosses in fr. 20029 frequently make use of these parts of the De contemptu mundi. They demonstrate the potential to enable the multi-dimensional reading, most clearly visible in the places where readers are faced with French verse, papal exegesis, and scriptural quotation: I offer here a single example. Folio 5v of Deschamps’ vernacular offers a verse translation of the first chapter of De contempt, here shown in Table 5.1:

**TABLE C.1**

**BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE MS FR. 20029 FOL. 5V**

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Et Job en plourant s’escrie: Que ne fut ma char perie, Ne pour quoy fu je alaittiez? Pour quoy naqui je a folie Pour estre m’ame bruie? J’amasse meulx estre sechiez Ou ventre qui me fust chiez Et sepulture acompli, Ou peris hors la navie Tantost que j’en sui vuidiez.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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The Latin is a source quotation from Innocent’s text of the De miseria, whence the French material comes, compiled from a collection of quotations from
the book of Job, drawn from his laments at having been brought into existence. The manuscript visually presents that Latin like a gloss, written in a smaller hand alongside the French verse. Deschamps’ text closely parallels the guiding *leitmotif* of the chapter, eliding much of the rest of the treatise to telescope reader focus onto the more lyric elements of Job’s complaint—albeit with some creative liberties in translation.

The attentive, Latin-literate medieval reader, however, one familiar with Deschamps’ source in the *De contemptu*, could recognize this section as being of a piece with the two that precede it—Jeremiah’s complaint about the sinful nature of the world and the author’s lament about his own comparatively deplorable state—in which the lyric lament of the Book of Job is grounded in Innocent’s awareness of the originary sinfulness of human nature. A careful medieval reader might, moreover, read deeper still, interpreting Innocent’s text and its vernacular cousin in the fuller sense of the larger narrative of the Book of Job. Here, Job’s complaint, ineffectively refuted by his friends, is at last answered by the reminder that God’s ways, and his mercy, are inscrutable—and of course, by the restoration of Job’s good fortune. This recontextualization does not present the medieval reader with quite the same set of competing and at times contradictory *auctores*. Nevertheless, it reimagines the contempt of the world genre with a hopeful undertone. It presents readers with the reminder, in a text that concludes with an elaborate meditation on the reality of death and the damnable fate of the wicked, that there is an alternative—that God loves humanity, though he may also punish the sinful.

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There is fair reason to associate Chaucer's work with Deschamps' *Double lai*; Stephen Partridge cites it as a likely source of influence on the presentation of the "Man of Law's Tale." The full extent of Chaucer's itineraries on the continent, and his connections to his French contemporaries likely will never be fully understood, but their influence is beyond arguing. James Wimsatt argues that Chaucer's first encounter with Guillaume de Machaut's poetry, read aloud at court, "must have constituted a revelation." While much of Wimsatt's account of Chaucer's likely encounters with his French contemporaries is rather speculative, it is at least a potent reminder of how very little is known, and how very much is possible in Chaucer's time abroad; during Chaucer's imprisonment at Reims, he at least occupied the same city as both Machaut and Deschamps; mutual acquaintences of the poets may well have given Chaucer access to manuscripts of French verse even while he remained in England. Likewise, Jean Froissart long occupied London; given both of their connections to the English court—Froissart, Wimsatt claims, had

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449 Partridge, *Glosses*, II. James Wimsatt, curiously for all that he happily indulges his imagination in speculating detailed histories in which Chaucer interacted on a regular basis with Machaut, Deschamps, and Froissart, he nonetheless avoids giving similar credence to associations between the *ordinatio* of the two manuscripts: "Any direct connection between the two writers’ versions of Innocent III’s *De miseria conditionis humanae* is quite doubtful. Chaucer says he translated this treatise, though the text is not extant, but we do have verse translations of limited passages in the Man of Law’s Tale and the Pardoner’s Tale. A few years previous to these translations by Chaucer, Deschamps composed a verse version of certain parts of Innocent’s work under the title *Double lay de la fragilité humaine*, and he presented a handsome manuscript copy of the work, together with the relevant parts of the Latin text, to Charles VI in 1383." James I Wimsatt, *Chaucer and His French Contemporaries: Natural Music in the Fourteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 266.

450 Wimsatt, *Chaucer and His French Contemporaries*, 77.

451 Wimsatt, *Chaucer and His French Contemporaries*, 78-96.
“semi-official status as a court poet” we might stand perhaps on firmer ground in suggesting they may have known one another; yet either way, we know that Chaucer was familiar with Froissart’s work.

This leads me to the final means of assessing the idiosyncrasy of the readers that form the focal points of this dissertation: whether or not Chaucer knew his French contemporaries personally, there is clear evidence of his textual debts to Machaut, Deschamps, and Froissart, along with Dante and Boccaccio; each of them, readers whose oeuvres tackle metadiagrammatic representations of reading practices: of texts like theirs—other poems—and texts of their own, including those texts into which their imagined readers are inscribed. Chapter Four explores briefly the literary representations of affective readers like Harley 2392’s—Dante’s Paolo and Francesca are consummate practitioners of this sort of affective literacy, their own ill-fated affair borne out of their shared perusal of the prose Lancelot and the recognition that the signs of love represented on the manuscript page mirrored—or generated—their own interior experience. Their narrative fate clearly conveys Dante’s disapproval, but he nonetheless represents their affective experience; moreover, Mary Carruthers, observes, medieval theories of memory did not necessarily forbid this mode of textual consumption: “[Paolo and Francesca’s] fault is not in having read the Lancelot in the first place, nor is it simply in allowing their reading to create desire; it is in reading ‘no further,’ ‘imperfectly’ in the medieval

452 Wimsatt, *Chaucer and his French Contemporaries*, 177.

sense. ... similarly here, Paolo and Francesca are not wrong to utilize Lancelot and Guinevere as instructive examples, nor to re-write their story in their own memories.” Boccaccio, as Chapter Four notes, appears to have viewed these practices, clearly filtered through Dante, with more approbation: he adopts Dante's metonymic assignation of “Galehaut” into approbation, subtitling the Decameron the “Prençipe Galeotto”, tacitly encouraging its appropriation into affective mimetic self comprehension and refashioning. His choice of nomenclature directs readers paratextually to seek themselves in his tales, and to re-evaluate themselves, their interior lives and their exterior experiences, accordingly. These fictional readers may be themselves likewise idiosyncratic, individual portrayals of the kinds of affective reader discussed in Chapter Four, but their representation itself speaks to medieval authors’ preoccupation with the potential for real readers to apply themselves to their creations with similarly emotional purpose; Boccaccio simply makes good on this threat, instead inviting readers of the Decameron to do just that.

The affective literacies witnessed in Harley 2392, then, appear significantly less

idiosyncratic when read against Dante’s concern that readers might indeed approach his own verse thus, and Boccaccio’s suggestion that his make a point of doing so.

What of the reading practices enabled by Chaucer’s glosses, the deliberate polysemy with which the manuscript page confronts those who look upon it? Here, too, Chaucer’s French contemporaries can help round out this picture. Deborah McGrady’s *Controlling Authors* sketches a thorough portrait of not only Guillaume de Machaut’s concerted attempts to shape the reception of his work. The direction with which he allegedly oversaw the copying of manuscripts of his poetry reflects a response, McGrady argues, to “a perceived aggressive audience that threatened to appropriate and rewrite his text at every turn.”

Faced with precisely the kind of reading audience Chaucer’s glosses appear to embrace—one with an indeterminate breadth and depth of literary educational background, and an untraceable field of potential intertextual reference from which those might begin to form any number of competing interpretations of his verse—Machaut responds by attempting to minimize their influence.

Like Dante, Machaut addresses the potential threat by inscribing it into his text and rewriting it under his control, realized most fully in the *Voir Dit*, where his meta-narrative inscribes an extensive textual love affair, conducted at every point

\[\text{\footnotesize 455 Deborah McGrady, *Controlling Readers: Guillaume de Machaut and His Late Medieval Audience*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 9.}\]

\[\text{\footnotesize 456 McGrady, *Controlling Readers*, 15.}\]
slightly out of the control that his narrator thinks he exerts over it. Yet Machaut attempts to restrict these possibilities, limiting extent to which Toute-Belle is given authority and editorial influence in the ‘final’ version of the text which we read—possibly even implying that the final copy she is given is different from that which we now read. Much of this accomplished through re-inscribing and privileging the material artifact. Intriguingly, for as much as Machaut appears deeply anxious about the impossibility of asserting a stable, correct—or true—narrative, he manages it, per Grady’s interpretation, through precisely that same impossibility:

He [Machaut] implies that by fracturing the public and inviting readers to approach the text individually, an author can reassert his own authority over the text. The public can enjoy a rapid volley that moves the text further and further out of the author’s reach ... but the author can recollect the pieces of his text, constitute a literary edifice, and erect barriers. Readers must then play with locks, enigmas, and riddles as well as juggle an overwhelming number of texts to gain access to the much desired truth the author professes to possess. ... The cacaphony that issues form the Voir dit as a result of various readers competing with the author to produce a ‘true story’ ... presents a full spectrum of interpretations only to conclude with an enigmatic game that insists on a single but forever unattainable truth.

Readers’ inability to fix the author’s singular meaning effectively re-subordinates their own interpretations to a literary truth, the kind of orthodox interpretation espoused in more didactically-focused models or reading. Yet, this kind of control is

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459 McGrady, *Controlling Readers*, 74.
only possible through the acceptance and manipulation of reader-centric
ermeneutic indeterminacies. Moreover, this practice is embedded in the physical
codex in a way that mimics, in miniature, the intertextualities of The Canterbury
Tales glosses: "As guidelines for reading, the command to seek out additional
materials effectively requires the audience to approach the work as material
readers, that is, as readers who would physically manipulate the codex by flipping
through its pages to discover these other entries."460 The puzzles through which
readers must sort are a form in intra-codex intertextual reference, comparing
disparate parts, individual lyrics and letters within the Voir dit in order to reach a
deeper interpretation only accessible after sifting through the other layers of
meaning, from which readers remain free to interpret the “real” affair underneath
the text in any way they choose—including modern readers who theorize and
attempt to locate a historic Toute-Belle.

As Dante’s anxieties found warmer reception in their Boccaccian afterlife, so
did Machaut’s find a successor who rather embrace the essential ability of the
reader to shape interpretation. Where Machaut attempted to shape representation
back to a single point, even if he refused to disclose it, Jean Froissart, on the other
hand, “rewrites Machaut’s text to make room for his readers,”461 and scripts a
practice of reading in which their power over the reception of his text is desirably
generative. His La Prison Amoureuse is commented upon internally, "glossed by

460 McGrady, Controlling Readers, 94.

461 McGrady, Controlling Readers, 171-189, at 171.
Flos’ Lady, Rose, and Rose’s lady,” whose reading practices inspire their own creation, in the form of Rose’s dreams, which he writes down, asks the poet to explicate, through which Rose’s lady “requests further additions to the text.”

Perhaps most significantly in this exchange, this negotiation of meaning is left ultimately in the hands of the reader: “Finding the prince’s dream [to be particularly rich in meaning, Flos proposes multiple potential interpretations and leaves it to Rose to choose the most appropriate (Letter IV). Both Rose and his lady delight in the rich and diverse responses proposed by the narrator, and in a follow-up letter, Rose requests that Flos produce a livret of the multilayered correspondence.”

Froissart inscribes—approvingly—precisely the model of reading enabled by Chaucer’s glosses, one in which the author confronts readers with multiple possible interpretations of his work, and invites them to select the one they like best—a choice which, McGrady suggests, is likewise reinforced by the mise-en-page of the text’s manuscript presentation in its material form.

Machaut and Froissart may represent with vary degrees of enthusiasm the same multi-dimensional reading practices as Chaucer, yet they share more significantly the decision to engage those practices in the first place, confronted with, McGrady argues, a changing readership whose increasingly private reading spaces abstracted them from external controls

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462 McGrady, *Controlling Readers*, 172.


that might help guide their interpretation. Machaut agonizes over increased readerly control; Froissart “fantasizes about” an audience much like the ideal reader of *The Canterbury Tales* glosses: “an informed audience, capable of mastering the skills of the professional reader,” but they, too, testify to the wide scope with which reading practices like those which this dissertation explores.

The presence, in these French metaliterary texts, of reading practices akin to the alternative methods witnessed in the authorial glosses and readers’ annotations to *The Canterbury Tales* and to *Troilus and Criseyde* should be cause further reflexion on Chaucer’s own French-inspired verse. Why, given the extent to which the poet experimented with French texts and forms, might he not also have adopted or adapted their approaches to literature about literature, particularly in the early dream vision poems which betray both the poet’s debt to his French sources and his skepticism of scholastic *auctoritas*? How might we reimagine the bumbling narrator of *The Book of the Duchess*, and his repeated inability to correctly read the increasingly more explicit significance of the Black Knight’s narrative? The text positions readers, from the beginning of its frame narrative, to attune themselves to the poem’s discussions of textuality: the narrator, attempting to assuage his insomnia, turns to literature—Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*—for consolation (*BD 44-230*). He follows the model he finds in the book, by which Alcione overcomes her own insomnia, and upon falling asleep, he dreams that he occupies that intertextual

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465 McGrady, *Controlling Readers*, 3-44.

466 McGrady, *Controlling Readers*, 188-89.
chamber painted with the *Roman de la Rose* and glazed with the story of the Trojan War. *The Book of the Duchess*, then even if not expressly a narrative about literary creation, is still one of literary consumption: Chaucer’s narrator is a reader several times over, participating in a dream about (failed) interpretation which is embedded in a dreamed world literally composed of both Latin and French poetry, itself embedded in a story about reading Ovid. Within this context, when The Black Knight chides the narrator, “Thou wost ful lytel what thou menest” (*BD* 744), he complains about a problem of interpretation, reacting to the narrator’s continued flights of interpretive fancy in which he either does not, or cannot attend to the real meaning behind the Knight’s words.

In a sense, the narrator acts out exactly the unrestrained reading practices enabled by Chaucer’s glosses and contemplated by both Machaut and Froissart. The narrative of *The Book of the Duchess* finally comes to an abrupt halt as soon as the narrator understands the real significance of the Knight’s loss, and the narrator awakens, determined to record the dream in verse:

> Thoghte I, “Thys ys so queynt a sweven  
> That I wol, be processe of tyme,  
> Fonde to put this sweven in ryme (*BD* 1330-32).

The poem ends with the reminder that readers have just read those verses for themselves, bracketing the story of reader-determined interpretation within depictions of both poetic reading and poetic making. The narrator may not be a particularly skilled interpreter, but the meanings he creates on his own supplement

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467 And, at 1138, “thow nost what thou menest.”

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the Black Knight’s narrative, leading him to expand upon his verse until the entire tale is generated. In this way, *The Book of the Duchess* might be reinterpreted as the meta-literary representation of the approach to reading and interpretation as it came to be embodied in *The Canterbury Tales*.

What these meta-narratives should help convey is that the readers they inscribe enact the hermeneutic practices demonstrated in the manuscripts at the heart of this dissertation. They tell stories in which texts are read—often productively—outside of models of interpretation found in the academic prologues to the classical and scriptural authors. The readers, in short, of Cambridge, University Library MS Gg 4.27 and Cambridge, Saint John’s College, MS L.1, of *The Canterbury Tales* glosses, and of British Library MS Harley 2392, individual though they may be, are not so idiosyncratic after all. The true bounds, however, of their currency remain largely obscured; it must be the work of future scholarship to continue to uncover them.
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